SERMONS,

ON THE

NATURE, OFFICES, AND CHARACTER,

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

By the Rev. T. BOWDLER, A.M.

The Second Edition.

VOL. I.

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TO

JOSEPH COTTON, ESQ. F. R. S.

DEPUTY MASTER OF THE TRINITY HOUSE, &c. &c.

My dear Sir,

The time is past when a book on a religious subject might have appeared an unseemly or unwelcome offering to a person sitting at a public board, or engaged in commercial pursuits; and the mercantile world now exhibits many characters not less distinguished by their piety, than by that wealth and public spirit which have made our merchants as princes, and our traffickers the honourable of the earth.

To you, indeed, a work like the present will at all times find a ready admission; and if the author has any difficulty in thus addressing you, it is of a different kind. The language of dedication is naturally and

proverbially complimentary. But compliment and panegyric would, in the present instance, be ill suited to the patron's taste, and ill calculated to express the author's sentiments. May not that, however, which has sometimes been made the occasion of idolizing greatness, or palliating vice, be employed with much propriety to testify respect for energy and integrity in the discharge of public duties; and affectionate regard for those amiable qualities in private life, which enliven and adorn the social circle, and introduce peace and comfort into the bosom of a family? And yet these qualities, estimable as they may be, are not of the highest importance in the eye of a teacher of religion. It is as a Christian, deeply impressed with sentiments of piety, that a Christian teacher addresses you. You have studied the truths of the Gospel, and felt its consolations. It has sanctioned, and, as it were, hallowed the enjoyment of prosperity; and has supplied motives, not to patience only, but to pious thankfulness, in the hour of darkness and sorrow. The principles which have been firmly planted in your own mind, you have diligently and

successfully inculcated in those who are the chief objects of your affection and solicitude; and that endearing connection which subsists between us is strengthened by an union of sentiments on the most important of all subjects.

Whatever tends to display the perfections and exalt the character of our blessed Lord cannot fail to be acceptable to his servants; and there is something peculiarly gratifying in turning from the din and wrath of controversy which is heard on every side, to contemplate the fair form of Christianity in the person of its divine Author. Let us then ascend together to Him who is the great source of wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and there observe how mercy and truth met together in the divine counsels for the salvation of a ruined race; and have been operating, under every dispensation, but with peculiar force and benignity under that of the Gospel; the one, to provide pardon for the sinner, and strength for the needy; the other, to guide the wanderer into the path of duty and peace. The consideration of the nature, offices, and character of Jesus

Christ includes an enquiry into nearly the whole system of doctrine and duty contained in the Gospel. The examination may be made in the present form, if not with peculiar advantage, yet in a manner singularly interesting and affecting; and particularly delightful to those who, under an humbling sense of their own infirmities, place their sure hope and confidence in the prevailing merits of their Saviour. The subjects discussed in these volumes will recommend themselves to your notice without farther introduction: let me request your favourable acceptance of them as a small testimony of gratitude for great and continued kindness, and of that sincere regard with which I am ever,

My dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate

THOMAS BOWDLER.

9th April, 1818.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE volumes now offered to the public are intended to point out the Nature and Offices of Jesus Christ. For the purpose of executing this design more completely, the author has introduced among his texts several of the Titles of that blessed Person. In this respect he has deviated a little from his original intention as expressed in the preface to the former edition, being seduced by the captivating nature of some, and the opportunity which others afforded for discussing the most important doctrines of religion. An explanation of all the Titles given to the Son of God would lead into a very wide field, and occasion much repe-

tition; and is calculated rather for a treatise than for a series of detached discourses.

The author has taken occasion, upon printing a second edition, to make a new arrangement of his subjects. The first of these volumes will be found to contain the discourses on the Nature of Christ and his most important Offices, arranged in historical order. The four first sermons in the second volume are occupied with the important topics of Justification and Regeneration: these are succeeded by six which are chiefly intended to exhibit the Mediatorial Office of our Lord in the divine dispensations; and the rest are devoted to the discussing of some of the most important among the Titles bestowed upon him, or perhaps more properly the Doctrines suggested by those Titles.

Being desirous to render his work more worthy of perusal, the author has made some corrections in the sermons already published. These are, however, for the most part, of little consequence. A section has been inserted in the sermon on the Restorer of Israel and Judah; and some slight alterations have been made in other

places. More important additions have been introduced, partly in the form of notes, into the sermons on the Mediator of a better Covenant, for the purpose of explaining and illustrating the author's sentiments. The opinion which he has there expressed respecting the nature of the Mosaic law having been deemed erroneous in a quarter where respect was peculiarly due, he has endeavoured to obviate what he believes to have been a misunderstanding, arising rather from incorrect expressions than from a difference of sentiment. He is the more anxious upon this point, because, though the nature of his subject has necessarily led him to dwell upon the inferiority of the Mosaic dispensation, yet he is so far from undervaluing it, or the faith of those who lived under it, that the high opinion which he entertains of both would be deemed by some persons excessive. But then he would desire to consider it in its true nature, as being strictly a law, as a system peculiarly intended for those who were subject to God's immediate government, and typical of better things; and on every account containing temporal sanctions, and

necessarily imperfect: and he would trace the faith and religious knowledge of the Israelitish nation to a higher and an older source, or to divine communications made from time to time, which formed no part of that law which was delivered from Mount Sinai. In drawing a comparison between the two dispensations, he has endeavoured to follow the course adopted by the apostle who has suggested it; and upon the whole of this subject he is (if he be not greatly mistaken) supported by the authority of that ornament of the English Church, the learned Bishop Bull.

A series of discourses in which Jesus Christ is not only the most conspicuous character, but the main subject, can scarcely fail to be in itself a body of divinity. Accordingly, these volumes will be found either to touch shortly, or to discuss at greater length, almost every doctrine of the Gospel. A systematic arrangement, however, is not to be easily effected: and while some doctrines are pointed out by the very titles of the discourses, the place where others may be sought will not be so obvious. The Incarnation of our Lord, and union of

both natures will be found under the head of the Son of Man; the offices of Priest and King under the Intercessor and Head over all Things to the Church; the Atonement under the Lamb of God; the nature of the Gospel, as a dispensation of grace and mercy, is pointed out in the sermon on the Preacher of the Gospel; the doctrine of Regeneration, as the beginning of the spiritual life in man, in that which bears the title of Our Life; and the union of the faithful disciple with his Lord in the True Vine, and those which follow. Some topics which do not form separate subjects of consideration, as the necessity of divine grace, and the disposition with which the gospel is to be received, are frequently, almost continually inculcated; the nature of Faith is taught more particularly in the second Sermon on Justification; and the offices of the Holy Spirit, as the gift of Jesus Christ to his church, in that which shews him as its Head.

If any persons should object that the doctrines of Election and Predestination have no place in these discourses, the author would observe that in fact they are

occasionally noticed; and so far from seeking an opportunity of a regular discussion of these topics, which manifestly does not enter into his plan, he would earnestly and anxiously avoid it. On this point he strengthens himself by the authority of the eminently pious and profoundly learned Bishop Andrewes, prefixed to his judgment on the Lambeth Articles, which is here submitted to the reader, in a translation (though to the manifest injury of the original) in the hope that it may be thereby more generally known.

'The four first Articles relate to Predestination and Reprobation; the former of which draws from the Apostle the exclamation, "Oh the depth!" the latter is called by the Psalmist, "a great deep."—I have certainly (I freely confess) followed the advice of Augustine: the mysteries which I could not open I have contemplated with admiration in their awful obscurity; and therefore for these sixteen years, since I became a Presbyter, I have neither discussed them in public or private, nor handled them in the pulpit; and even now I had rather hear than speak of them.

And indeed since the subject is perilous, and has on each side 'dangerous downfals;' and since the passages of St. Paul, from which it is for the most part drawn forth, have always been reckoned among those which St. Peter says are "hard to be understood;" and since there are not many of the clergy who can ably explain them, and very few of the people who are qualified to hear of them; I would advise, if it were possible, that silence should be enjoined on both sides; and that they should not be so generally and crudely propounded by any who may take them in hand, as is apt to be the case. Certainly I conceive it would be much better that the people should be taught to seek their salvation in the plain paths of a holy and religious life, (which also is the advice of St. Peter,) than in the secret things of divine counsel: for this, if too curiously examined, may turn a man's brains, and is apt to do so; but certainly scarce ever produces edification in minds that are not much enlarged.'

He who does not please himself can scarcely hope to satisfy less partial judges; and the author acknowledges with regret,

that his sentiments are but imperfectly expressed in the following pages. Let him be permitted to offer an explanation, rather than an apology for some of the defects of his style, by stating that many of these discourses were originally intended for the lower orders; and, perhaps, some favour may be extended to them, if, when prepared for the public eye, they should be found to have lost something of plainness and simplicity, without attaining the praise of elegance; and something of affectionate address, without assuming a loftier tone. Possibly too, even the nature of the subjects of which they treat may be pleaded in their favour. These subjects are so sublime, as to demand the pen of inspiration: so vast, yet so affecting, that the mind sinks under the mingled emotions of wonder and delight, of distant reverence, holy fear, and ardent love. Yet, as the loftiest human eloquence can add nothing to the importance of a divine message, neither will its dignity be impaired, if it appear without the aid of rhetorical ornament. To the humble, pious Christian, these discourses may, perhaps, afford some topics for reflection, consola-

tion, and practical improvement; to the lukewarm they may furnish incentives to zeal; to the ignorant they may afford instruction: above all, they may impress on the mind of the reader, as the author humbly hopes they have produced on his own mind, more exalted views of the Saviour of the world, and a livelier feeling of gratitude for all the blessings of redemption: and he will be abundantly gratified if those who peruse this volume shall find their attention so occupied by the subjects before them, as to make them forget the writer, in their contemplation of Him, who is the Author and Finisher of their faith, the Source of their present peace and future happiness.

The Character of our Lord yet remains to be discussed in a separate volume of practical discourses which is nearly completed, but not being necessarily connected with those which precede it, the author is desirous of withholding it for a short time.

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SERMON I.

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Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

To those who would be thoroughly acquainted with any branch of knowledge it is of the first importance that they study carefully the grounds and principles of it. So fascinating is theory, and so readily does the mind acquiesce in its own inventions, and follow up a train of arguments and deductions suited to its taste, its fancy, or preconceived opinions, that it is easily hurried on to the most intemperate and unwarrantable conclusions. The foundation, therefore, of every art and science must be laid

in some acknowledged truth ; some principle must be established, to which there may be a continual recurrence; lest the fancy, seduced by some fair vision, wander into the mazes of falsehood and error. — And, surely, no less care should be taken to build upon a sure foundation, in the great concerns of religion. Rather should the superior importance of the subject ensure the greater vigilance and caution in the choice of our principles. For though in human science falsehood and error are always pregnant with danger, how greatly is that danger increased, when we enter upon a subject which involves such important practical conclusions ! a subject in which God is the Teacher, and the salvation of the soul is at stake ! Here is no room for invention or conjecture : we have but to receive with devout faith and implicit confidence that which has been clearly revealed. Yet here, more perhaps than in any other subject, every thing is closely connected with the first and leading principle : all the doctrines which are delivered for belief, and the duties which are required to be practised, the motives to obedience, and the as-

sistance whereby men are enabled to perform their duty, the nature of their union with God and with each other, their condition in this world and their hopes in futurity, all depend upon one great principle; they are parts of one system — links in the mighty chain which binds earth to heaven.

Every religious system, whether it teach that there are "Gods many, and Lords many," or inculcate faith in one God and Saviour, will have one or two leading principles, which are the first articles of belief. The religion of Moses taught the existence and unity of Jehovah, and upon this doctrine were founded all the precepts of the law, and all claim of the lawgiver to the obedience of the people. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Or, if we may adopt a translation which points out more distinctly the two leading articles of faith, "*Jehovah is our God; Jehovah is One.*" The Christian religion, confirming by its holy sanction the doctrines of the Mosaic dispensation, adds thereto the full and clear revelation of that which had been before but darkly shadowed

out — the doctrine of Redemption from the power of the evil one, and Atonement for sin by the blood of the Son of God. *Salvation by Jesus Christ* is the fundamental principle of the Gospel; and belief in Him as the *Son of God* and the *Saviour of men* is the distinguishing article of a Christian's faith. This is the simple but firm foundation, upon which is raised that wonderful system, which has enlarged our knowledge, and exalted and improved our nature; which embraces all duties, whether social or personal, whether owing to God or to man; which has united the creatures to their Maker, and made the glory of the most high God manifest itself in good-will to men. This, saith the Apostle, is the basis and ground of the Christian religion; and no other, he tells us, can be laid. No one who is acquainted with the nature of his religion will attempt it; and no one, we may add, who has studied the mercy of God in Christ, and felt its cheering influence in his heart, will be so rash as to build his hopes on any other foundation.

It is not enough, then, that we believe

and worship the One supreme God. "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." (*a*) If we would "come unto the knowledge of the truth," we must believe, that as "there is one God," so there is also "one Mediator between God and man." These two fundamental doctrines have been united in an eternal bond, and no mortal hand may presume to separate them. The danger of so rash an attempt will be manifest from the sequel of this discourse, in which I shall set before you some particulars, to show that the doctrine of Jesus Christ is the foundation of every part of our religious system. If, for instance, we hold not Christ the head, what union have we with the Father? If we do not look to Him as a perfect Teacher and Lawgiver, do we not throw away the most excellent code of duties which was ever delivered, and abandon the highest motives to purity and holiness? If we do not believe in Him as the Resurrection and the Life, upon what ground

(*a*) 1 Cor. viii. 6.

shall we build our hopes of a future immortality? Nay, if we do not acknowledge Jesus Christ, the Son of God, what do we know or believe of the Father? For it is manifest that greater and more certain knowledge of the Deity has been conveyed to us by Him, than was ever taught in all the systems of Gentile philosophy, or even in former Divine revelations. — But above all, how fatal are the consequences of a disbelief or disregard of Jesus Christ as a Sacrifice for sin? Mark the natural, but melancholy, ruin of every thing sacred and venerable, when this fundamental doctrine is rejected from the Creed. The miraculous conception and pre-existence of Christ, — the personal existence and gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, — the existence of good and evil angels, — are at once overthrown; the Saviour of the world becomes a weak and fallible man, subject to ignorance and prejudice, to frailty and infirmity, liable to sin, if not actually sinful: the word of God, deprived of that inspiration which had shed over it a heavenly grace, and invested it with divine authority, is brought to the

bar of human criticism; and mutilated and misconstrued, while Divine Revelation is made to bow before the all-sufficient reason of man: the fall of man, the corruption and sinfulness of our nature, the rich mercy of God in our redemption, the satisfaction made by Christ, the holy operation of the Spirit in the heart, and the guidance and support of divine Grace, — these are all torn from the sacred edifice by the same rash hand which removed the corner-stone out of its place: the punishment denounced against sin is deprived of its terrors; and even the reward of the faithful loses half its charms, since it is no longer the purchase of a Redeemer's blood, it no longer consists in the full exercise of ardent piety, it is no longer the perfection of those spiritual feelings which have been wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and nourished by the contemplation of Divine love. When the foundation has been removed, and all that excites veneration and delight thrown down from that fair structure which the wisdom and goodness of God had erected, what will the ruins exhibit, but a cold system of moral duties, under which the heart

remains unaltered, in all its pride and all its selfishness? a system grounded upon no solid basis, and exciting no powerful interest in the heart; of duties, neither warmed by gratitude for redeeming love, nor urged by remorse for past offences. And does not the building of God, thus mutilated and defaced, totter almost to its fall? Is not the scanty remnant of the Gospel in danger of being lost? So little, even in the opinion of its own advocates, does the altered face of Christianity differ from Deism; so small is the interval by which it is removed from unbelief. (*a*)

But we, brethren, have not so learned Christ, as to deny him in his high and merciful character of "the Lord that bought us." We have not so studied "the truth as it is in Jesus," as not to see in Him the great "propitiation for the sins of the world."

(*a*) See Dr. Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, v. i. p. 175. v. ii. p. 412. third edition, and Appendix to fourth edition, p. 349. See also the whole of that most valuable work, and particularly the 'Appendix to the third edition, containing an account of the Unitarian Scheme, as described by Mr. Belsham,' for a detail of the melancholy effects which follow the denial of Jesus Christ in his Divine Nature, and in his peculiar character of "the Lord that bought us."

Here we lay our foundation, upon this we build our faith, and hence we derive every powerful and every endearing motive to the sublimest devotion, and the purest morality. "So we preach and so ye believe." "We preach Christ crucified; Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God:" and you, "as ye have received Christ Jesus our Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith."

Having shown you the important consequences of a true belief in Jesus Christ, let us turn to the text, and endeavour to comprehend the full meaning of that which is said by the Apostle to be the foundation of our religion; and then to explain how it is a perfect and solid ground for every part of our religion.

I. The foundation is Jesus Christ. He who was the second Person in the Trinity, God the Son, undertook, when man was in a lost and ruined state, the work of saving and redeeming his wretched creatures. I say, *when man was lost and ruined,* for unless we bear in mind that the whole race of man

was fallen and corrupt, and at enmity with God, we shall not understand either the extent of his salvation, or the riches of his goodness. For this great purpose of saving a lost world he came down from heaven, took upon himself our nature, lived amongst men, and died by their hands; raised himself from the dead, and by his own almighty power ascended to the highest glory in heaven. He lived and conversed with men, that he might form a church, or society of believers of which he is the head; that he might instruct them by his precepts, and exhibit an unerring pattern by his example; that he might make known to them God the Father of all, Himself the Redeemer of mankind, and the Holy Ghost, their Comforter and Spiritual Guide; that he might oppose light to darkness, and truth to error, and correct the false notions which prevailed in the world; that he might open to the eyes of men the future state, assure them of the certainty of a resurrection after death, animate them to the performance of their duty by the promise of unspeakable joys, and awaken their fears by denouncing the most dreadful pu-

nishment to unrepenting sinners. These were the objects for which he lived amongst men. He died, to make atonement for our sins, to satisfy the justice of God, and reconcile man to his Maker. He rose, to complete our justification, to prove the truth of his mission, and particularly to be the pledge and assurance of our resurrection. He ascended into heaven, to be head over all things to the Church, to send the Holy Spirit to be the guide and support of his disciples, and to prepare the heavenly mansions which are to reward his faithful followers. From thence he will again appear at the end of the world, in power and great glory, to judge the quick and the dead, and render to every man according to his works. In the mean time, by the blessed Spirit which was shed forth abundantly on the first believers, and which still exerts its holy influence in the hearts of the faithful, he guides and directs his servants; checks the ungodly motions which rise in their hearts; leads them to repentance and the practice of virtue; puts into their minds good desires, and brings the same to good effect.

This it is which the Apostle intends, when he lays the foundation of our religion in the doctrine of Jesus Christ. I might have carried your thoughts farther backward, even to the beginning of all things; and have showed you how this divine Person, who afterwards appeared as the Saviour of men, was the Word of God "by whom all things were made;" who conversed with Adam in Paradise, and with the Patriarchs and Prophets in all succeeding ages; who delivered the law from Mount Sinai; led his chosen people through the wilderness; dwelt upon the mercy seat between the Cherubim; who dispensed the judgments as well as the mercies of Jehovah, drove Adam from Paradise, brought a flood of waters upon the world for its wickedness, confounded the presumptuous builders at Babel, and rained fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah. I might show you how he has been in every age the object of pious expectation among the faithful; the object foretold by the songs of the Prophets, and prefigured by the types of the Law; the Author and the End of every dispensation. Such has been the belief of the Church in all

ages: such at least it was in the first and purest times. It was the constant opinion that the Son of God was from the beginning of the world the revealer of the Father's will to man; by whom all things were upheld, and the whole scheme of God's government of the world and of man's redemption was carried on.

Let us, however, for the present, confine our views to the period when Christ came upon earth; and to those circumstances which I have before enumerated to you, and which we may suppose to have been in the apostle's mind, when he affirmed that Jesus Christ is the foundation of our religion. And let us now proceed to enquire how he is the foundation of every part of it.

II. This was the second thing which I proposed for our consideration. We shall find that he is the Author and Finisher of our faith; that in some character or other he presents himself to us wherever we turn; that from him or through him all things are received, and to him all things must be referred.

1. Our redemption and reconciliation to God. This was evidently his work. "We have redemption through his blood." "He came into the world to save sinners." "God was in him reconciling the world unto himself." He thus became "the Author of eternal salvation." When man had fallen from the favour of God, it pleased the Almighty Father to restore his lost creatures. And how did he bring about their restoration? "By sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." "He is the propitiation for our sins." And, as the Apostle proceeds, "not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." All mankind had sinned, and gone astray, and become corrupt before God. The whole world lay in wickedness. He came "that the world through him might be saved." The important work of man's redemption, then, was effected by Jesus Christ.

2. Having reconciled us to the Father, and made us capable of salvation, he has not left us to our own strength. He promised his disciples the aid of the blessed Spirit to be their Comforter and their Guide, to dwell in them, and teach them all things.

This promise be fulfilled, when he sent the Holy Ghost on the first disciples, and especially on the Apostles, upon the day of Pentecost. It was He, who, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, shed forth that which" all who dwelt at Jerusalem, "wondered to see and hear." (*a*) But it was not only at the feast of Pentecost, or upon the first believers, that he poured forth the gift of the Holy Ghost. That Spirit was indeed given at that time in extraordinary measure; but his arm is not now shortened, nor his mercies restrained; and according to our necessities we are supplied with strength from above. He has promised to be with his disciples to the end of the world; he dwells in their hearts by faith; he makes them one with himself and with the Father. The Spirit which animates them is called *his* Spirit (*b*); all the blessings which the faithful stand in need of they receive through him: he is our life (*c*); he is made unto us *sanctification* (*d*), no less than *redemption.*

(*a*) Acts, ii. 33.
(*b*) Rom. viii. 9. Gal. iv. 9. 1 Pet. i. 11.
(*c*) John, i. 4. v. 40. vi. 35. xiv. 6. (*d*) 1 Cor. i. 30.

3. But man, having been once so *far gone from original righteousness,* is still inclined to evil. The infection of our nature remains even in those who are regenerate. (*a*) "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit;" and notwithstanding the redemption wrought by Christ, and the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost, yet we are continually falling into sin: "in many things we offend all." How then shall we obtain pardon for our frequent and too often heinous sins? We answer, through the same Person, blessed for evermore, by whom we are cleansed from the guilt of original corruption. The merits of his death are precious in the Father's sight. The "fountain" which he "opened" for all "uncleanness," will "wash" the penitent sinner from his iniquity, and cleanse him from his sin. He is our great High Priest, who having once made atonement by his blood, is now "passed into the heavens there to appear in the presence of God for us." "Who then is he that condemneth?" Who is he that passeth sentence of condemnation without mercy? Who is the penitent, that in the bitterness of de-

(*a*) Article ix.

spair, would doom himself to hopeless perdition? Let him lift up his eyes to his Saviour, seated at the right hand of power; to Him who is "a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress;" "who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." He will not even now lay aside the character of a Saviour: he is "able" and willing "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

4. But our blessed Lord is not only our Intercessor and Advocate; He is also "the Resurrection and the Life." He opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He brought the doctrine of "life and immortality to light by the Gospel" which he preached: He now prepares mansions of bliss for his true disciples: He will raise them out of the dust, and receive them to himself; and bestow upon them that happiness which he has purchased for them by his blood, and promised them in his word. Thus is Jesus Christ the end and reward of our faith, as well as the author of it. He is our life, and the hope of glory. Hear his gracious promise. "My sheep know my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (*a*) Eternal life is the gift of God; but it is *through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (*b*)

5. As it is from Him that the faithful expect to receive their reward, so it is He who shall pronounce sentence upon the wicked. He is not only our Saviour and Intercessor; but he is also to be our Judge, that he may at last receive the honour due to him from the faithless and disobedient, no less than from his true disciples. He who is "a chief corner-stone, elect, precious to them that believe," is to the disobedient "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence (*c*);" nay, a stone that shall fall upon them to grind them to powder. It is He, even "the Lord Jesus, who shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel."(*d*)

I have shown you that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, our Intercessor, the Giver of good gifts, the Rewarder of the faithful, the Dispenser of punishment to the disobe-

(*a*) John, x. 27, 28.
(*b*) Rom. vi. 23.
(*c*) 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.
(*d*) 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

dient. There are two other characters in which we must also consider him, as our Teacher and our Pattern.

6. He is our Teacher and Law-giver. All the knowledge of our religion which we possess comes from him. When the world was sunk in wickedness and ignorance, He, by his preaching, and that of his Apostles, instructed both Jews and Gentiles in the nature of the One true God; He taught them also his own nature, and the cause of his coming into the world; He opened their eyes to the glories of the future state; and set before them, on the one hand, the rewards which had been prepared for his faithful followers from the foundation of the world; and on the other, the shame and torment which await the wicked, who shall be partakers of everlasting misery with the Devil and his angels. He gave also the most pure and perfect rules of moral conduct; calculated not only to direct the actions, but to reform the heart, and curb the desires; correcting the false notions of men, enlarging their views, and elevating their affections: above all, pointing uniformly to one great motive of all duty — the fear

and love of God; the desire of securing his favour, the dread of eternal banishment from His presence. Thus you see Jesus Christ in the character of a Teacher and Law-giver. You must next consider him as enforcing his precepts by his example.

7. This was, no doubt, one great end of his living amongst men, that he might not only instruct them by his word, but set before them a perfect pattern of every virtue. Accordingly, He commands us not only to hearken to him, but to learn of him; and his Apostle St. Paul enjoins his disciples to be followers of him *as he is of Christ.* In the conduct of our blessed Lord we have the most perfect pattern which can possibly be exhibited. All the duties which we owe to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves, were practised by him in the highest and most excellent manner. If we wish to learn our duty to God, we may look to Christ, doing through life the will of his heavenly Father, suffering because it was his will, seeking his glory, performing his work, constant and earnest in prayer, his heart and affections set on things above. If we would study our duty

to our fellow-creatures, let us look unto Jesus: we shall find him actively employed in healing the sick, teaching the ignorant, reclaiming the wicked; his soul overflowing with love and charity; full of compassion to the distressed, and of forgiveness to his bitterest enemies. If we would learn to practise those duties which are said to be owing to ourselves, if we would reform our tempers, and conquer our passions; where shall we find such a pattern of meekness and humility, of patience and contentment, of temperance and self-denial, of purity and holiness, as in Him, who for our sakes was content to lead a life of misery, and suffer a death of shame and agony? Thus we see that, in addition to the characters in which we before considered our blessed Lord, we must look upon him also as our Teacher and our Example.

There are many other characters in which we may behold him: we cannot take any view of our religion, but he is immediately before our eyes. As Christians we are servants and disciples; and he is instantly present to our minds as our Lord and Master. Again, as Christians, we be-

long to one great society, the Church; and of this he is the Head: He the head, and we the members of his body, deriving all our strength and life from him. He is likewise present in all the prayers and ordinances of the Church: it is through Him that our petitions are offered to the Father: it is his name which we receive at our baptism, and his cross by which we are then signed: it is his body and blood which we feed upon in the Holy Communion. He is, in short, all in all to his followers — the Way, the Truth, and the Life — our Shepherd, our Priest, and our King.

Thus, then, you see that Jesus Christ is the foundation which the Apostle speaks of; the foundation of our religion and of every part of it; the foundation of our faith and trust in God — the foundation of all our hopes — may I not add of all our fears? since he has made known to us the terrors, no less then the mercies of the Lord; — the foundation upon which the Church is built; the chief corner-stone, by which it is compacted and held together. "Other foundation can no man lay." We

in our preaching can build upon no other: you can rest your faith upon no other: there is salvation by no other: there is no other from whom help can be derived: there is no other Mediator or Intercessor: no other King or Judge: no other Teacher or perfect example: no other Master to his Disciples, or Head to the Church.

Oh, then, my brethren, be earnestly desirous to be united to him. Separated or cut off from him you must perish everlastingly. The branch which is cut off from the vine must wither: and they who separate themselves from communion with Christ, who is the author of life and salvation, must fall into utter destruction. — Look up then to him with the eye of faith, and acknowledge him in the characters in which he has revealed himself to you. Accept with all thankfulness the salvation which he has purchased as your Redeemer; implore his aid and intercession as your King and Advocate with the Father; intreat his mercy, and deprecate his wrath, as he is your Judge, in whose hands are everlasting life and death; be closely united to him as your Head; through him present your suppli-

cations to the throne of grace; and feed upon his body and blood which he has given for the life of the world; with his powerful aid, and with his example before your eyes, follow his blessed steps; and form yourselves after his image in righteousness and true holiness. So shall you be firmly built up in him; so shall you be acknowledged by him before his Father and the holy angels, as his redeemed, his servants, his disciples, the members of his body, and the objects of his everlasting love.

SERMON II.

The Son of God.

John, xxi. 31.

These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The first thing required by the Apostles in those who would become Christians was, to believe in Jesus Christ. Repentance and newness of life were, indeed, always joined with faith. But as none would repent and forsake their sins, unless they embraced the doctrine of Christ; so no obedience could be of any avail, unless it sprung from a true and lively faith. Faith, therefore, in Jesus Christ was constantly enjoined, as the one thing needful,

by those who went forth to preach the Gospel. It was through Him that Jews and Gentiles were taught to expect remission of sins. It was by His Spirit that they were to be sealed unto the day of Redemption. It was by Him that God had called them to eternal glory. — This, I say, was the end of the Apostles' preaching: and this was the object of their writings. "These things are written," saith St. John, towards the end of his Gospel, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." And again, at the conclusion of his first Epistle, "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." (*a*)

The same doctrine which was taught by the Apostles is now taught by us who have succeeded them in the ministry. As Paul preached in the synagogues, so we now preach in the churches, namely, Christ the Son of God. If any who are now for the first time coming to a knowledge of the truth

(*a*) 1 John, v. 13.

ask, like the jailor at Philippi, "What must I do to be saved?" We answer with St. Paul, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." (*a*) If we have occasion to confirm the souls of those who have long been disciples, we exhort them, with the same Apostle, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught." (*b*) To all, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, we preach the Gospel of Christ, as "the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." (*c*)

But here it is important to know how we are to receive Jesus Christ; and what we are to believe respecting him; what was his office; — what his nature. In my last discourse I pointed out several of the characters in which he appears before us. But we ask, What was he in himself? What was he by nature? Was he God or man? Had he an existence before he came into the world? — These are points which well deserve your serious attention.

The object of the beloved disciple in his Gospel was (as you learn from the text) to

(*a*) Acts, xvi. 31. (*b*) Col. ii. 6, 7. (*c*) Rom. i. 16.

show " that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." These two characters, or titles, are continually joined together, and applied to Jesus. Thus in Peter's noble confession, " Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." (*a*) Thus also Martha expressed her belief, " I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (*b*) — This, then, may be said to be the substance of a Christian's belief, viz. that Jesus is the Christ, and that he is the Son of God. I shall endeavour to exhibit him to you in these two characters, and then I shall direct your attention to the words of St. John, in the latter part of the text, " that believing, ye may have life through his name."

I. Jesus is the Christ, —the Messiah. It is scarcely necessary to offer any proof of this to Christians; for if they did not believe it they could not be Christians, or Disciples of Christ. But for the confirmation of your faith I would remind you, that this blessed Person is proved to be the Christ, that is, the great Prophet who had been promised by God, in two ways more

(*a*) Matth. xvi. 16. (*b*) John, xi. 27.

particularly — by prophecies and by miracles; by the prophecies which were fulfilled in him; and by the miracles which he wrought.

By the prophecies he was pointed out in a most remarkable manner, as of the Seed of Abraham, of the Tribe of Judah, of the Family of David. It was foretold that he should be born of a Virgin, and in the town of Bethlehem. The time of his coming was so distinctly marked out, that not only the Jewish nation, but even the Gentile world was full of expectation. The object of his appearance, the miracles which he wrought, the nature of his preaching, his peculiar character, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, and ascension to glory, were all foretold by the Spirit of God. This is He, who was spoken of by the holy prophets which have been since the world began. "He, of whom all the Promises made mention, and he was the performance of them all; He, of whom all the Types under the law were shadows, and he was the substance of them all; He, whom all the Prophecies foretold, and he fulfilled them all; He, of whom other Saviours and deliverers were

the figures and forerunners, and he was the accomplishment of all that was wanting in them." (*a*)

That which was distinctly pointed out in the prophecies was confirmed by the miracles which he wrought. He was, as St. Peter tells the Jews, "approved among" them, that is, most clearly shown and proved to be the person whom he professed to be, "by miracles, and wonders, and signs." (*b*) So extraordinary were "the things which he did," that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, acknowledged him to be a teacher sent from God; and "many of the people believed on him, and said, when Christ cometh will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"(*c*) And if the works which he did during his life were an evidence of his heavenly mission, so that he constantly appealed to them for proof that he came from God, how much more clearly does it appear from his rising from the dead, and ascending up to heaven? These were always "produced" by the Apostles as "strong reasons" for believing that Jesus was the Christ; and in bearing their testi-

(*a*) Bishop Andrewes. (*b*) Acts, ii. 22. (*c*) John, vii. 31.

mony to this great truth they willingly suffered persecution, torments, and death.

Such is the proof from prophecies and from miracles, that Jesus is the Christ. — The word *Christ* means *anointed.* Those who were anointed in former times were prophets, priests, and kings. Jesus being "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power," was invested with each of these characters. He was a Prophet, or "teacher sent from God;" the very Word of God made flesh, to reveal the Father's will to men, and preach the Gospel to the poor. He was made "a Priest for ever," according to the Lord's oath; a Priest, who offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, and "ever liveth to make intercession" for his people. He was, moreover, and is a King, to whom "the Lord God gave the Throne of his father David;" King of kings, and Lord of lords, of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

When therefore we profess our belief that Jesus is the Christ, we declare that this our Lord and Master is indeed that Messiah who was promised by God to the Patriarchs, and foretold by the Prophets; the Redeemer of Israel, and the desire of

all nations; that this Jesus has been anointed by God to be a prophet, a priest, and a king, for us; a prophet, to declare the whole will of God to his creatures; a priest, who hath made atonement for sin by the sacrifice of himself; a king, who is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, where he shall reign till his enemies be made his footstool.

II. Jesus is the Son of God. Not in the sense in which Adam is called the son of God, because he was formed originally by the hand of God in his image and likeness. Not in the sense in which God's people, whether Jews or Christians, are called sons of the most high God, and children of God, because he is pleased to adopt them into his family, and bestow on them peculiar marks of his love. Not in the sense in vhich angels and glorified spirits are called by this name, being brought near to him, and made like him in purity and glory. These all are called by this honourable and affectionate title, to represent their likeness to him, and the love and favour which the Father hath bestowed upon them. But He

who was more than man, and higher than the angels; who was "before all things (*a*)," who "is the image of the invisible God (*b*)," "the express image of his person (*c*)," —He is called by this name in a far higher and nobler sense. Him we believe to have been the "very Son" of God; begotten of him in a manner not to be conceived by us, who know nothing of the divine nature. Hence he is frequently called by St. John, "the only-begotten Son of God (*d*);" begotten, as the Church expresses its belief, "before all worlds." He is a Son, therefore, not by adoption, but by nature. And if he be thus a Son, partaking of the divine nature, then is he truly God; "God of God;" God the Son; the second Person in the blessed Trinity — those three Divine Persons who compose the One eternal and glorious Godhead.

It is needless to enumerate the many occasions on which Jesus is called the Son of God. This was the belief expressed by Peter, and for expressing it he is pronounced by Jesus to be blessed. This was

(*a*) Col. i. 17. (*b*) Col. i. 15. (*c*) Heb. i. 3.
(*d*) John, i. 14. iii. 16. 1 John, iv. 9.

the confession of the disciples who heard his doctrine, of the Jews who saw his miracles, of the Roman Centurion who witnessed his crucifixion, and even of the Devils who felt his power. This was the doctrine constantly preached by the Apostles: this the title which he claimed to himself: and this the name by which the Father acknowledged him from heaven. (*a*) You will not therefore be surprised to find that the confession of this great truth is made the test of true believers. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (*b*) "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (*c*) "He that believeth on him is not condemned: he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." (*d*)

You see then clearly, it is hoped, (as clearly as our limited faculties will allow it to be seen by us,) the meaning of this great article of the Christian faith, that Jesus is

(*a*) Matth. iii. 17. (*b*) 1 John, iv. 15.
(*c*) 1 John, ii. 23. (*d*) John, iii. 18.

the Son of God. You see how plainly it is revealed — how necessary to be believed. It is that, for the professing of which our blessed Lord was condemned to be guilty of death; and you will not hesitate to receive that doctrine to which he bore testimony with his blood. It thus becomes one of the fundamental points in our religion (*a*); that which no one can deny who rests his hope of salvation on the death of Christ. He died, asserting his claim to this high title. Which of his faithful followers will refuse to give it him? Shall we not risk our future inheritance, if we deny him the honour due unto his name? How shall we venture to expect favour from the Father, if we refuse to acknowledge his dear and only-begotten Son?

(*a*) "This is the foundation and beginning of all Christianity, with word, heart, and mind, to confess that Christ is the Son of God. Whosoever believeth not this, Christ is not in him, and he cannot have the mark of Christ printed in his forehead, who confesseth not that Christ is the Son of God. Therefore Christ said unto Peter, that upon this rock, that is, upon this his confession, that he was Christ the Son of God, he would build his Church, to declare that without this faith no man can come to Christ; so that this belief, that Christ is the Son of God, is the foundation of our Christianity, and the foundation of our Church."

BISHOP RIDLEY *in his last Examination.*

It may confirm your faith in this important article of your religion, if you call to mind the several particulars which you learn from Scripture concerning the Son of God, before his coming in the flesh. You are there taught that he was with the Father (*a*), and came down from him (*b*): — that he partook of the Father's "glory before the world was (*c*);" — that "by him all things were created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; created by him, and for him (*d*):" — that even in the beginning he existed "with God;" and was "himself God (*e*):" — that he exists from eternity to eternity, the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (*g*):" — that he and the Father are one (*h*): — that he is "Jehovah God of hosts (*i*)," "God blessed for ever." (*k*) He "by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made (*l*):" He who is repeatedly called God (*m*), and the Lord (*n*), the

(*a*) John, xvii. 5. (*b*) John, xvi. 28. (*c*) John, xvii. 5.
(*d*) Col. i. 16. (*e*) John, i. 1, 2. (*g*) Rev. i. 11.
(*h*) John, x. 30. (*i*) Zech. ii. 8. (*k*) Rom. ix. 5.
(*l*) John, i. 3. (*m*) John, xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. 2 Pet. i. 1.
(*n*) Jer. xxiii. 6. Luke, i. 26. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

" mighty God, the everlasting Father (*a*):" He who is " the beginning and the ending; which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty (*b*):" He whom Isaiah described in that magnificent vision of " the Lord sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up, and his train filled the temple; and above it stood the Seraphim, and one cried to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory (*c*): He it is, who for our sakes was made man; who, " being in the form of God, and thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet divested himself of his divine glory, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (*d*)

What exalted ideas, what devout feelings, rise in our hearts, my brethren, upon this view of our subject; upon our being assured that our Redeemer is the Lord of hosts, who came upon earth to suffer and to die for us! What wonder at the greatness of this mystery! What admiration of his amazing condescension! What gratitude for his abundant loving kindness!

(*a*) Is. ix. 6. (*b*) Rev. i. 11.
(*c*) Is. vi. 1, 2, 3. See John, xii. 41. (*d*) Phil. ii. 6, 7.

What can so effectually work in us a hatred for sin, as the consideration that the everlasting God hath sent his Son to make atonement for it? What can so deeply impress us with a sense of the value of our immortal souls, and with an earnest desire to save them, and to save the souls of all those who are connected with us, as the thought of the vast price which was paid for their redemption; that they "were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold," but that God "hath purchased them with his own blood." (*a*) How does this thought engage us to love him with all our hearts, who hath so greatly loved us! to trust in our Saviour for all things necessary for our life and being! to trust in his power who is Almighty; to trust in his goodness, whose "mercy reacheth unto the clouds;" to trust in his promises who is truth itself! How does it teach us to "follow after righteousness" and "perfect holiness," since our Redeemer was perfectly just and holy! How while we reflect on the nature of him who wrought our redemption, and on all the wonders of his life and death, how are we

(*a*) Acts, xx. 28.

filled with a holy fear lest " we neglect so great salvation !"

Have then, my brethren, a lively faith in Jesus Christ, as the SON OF GOD. Fix in your hearts a firm persuasion that the most high God is the author of your salvation : that the blood which was shed for the pardon of your sins was the blood of the Son of God : that the example which you are to copy is the example of God : that the laws which you are to obey have been given you by God : that the Spirit which helpeth your infirmities is His Spirit : and that He the great and holy God, will be your Judge at the last day. While you have such an impression upon your minds, your thoughts and desires will be purified and exalted : it will strengthen your faith, enliven your hope, enlarge your charity, quicken your obedience. You will feel that your Christian state is a " high calling of God in Christ Jesus." You will feel too, that " as he which hath called you is holy, so must ye be holy in all manner of conversation. You will learn to cast all your care upon God, being convinced that, weak and unworthy as we are, he

careth for us. You will learn to set a true value on things above, knowing that they have been purchased for you, and prepared for you, by God himself.

Let it then be your most earnest prayer, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" and that you may be "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith." Acknowledge with all humility his divine nature, and meditate on his glorious perfections. While you make his life, as Man, the pattern of your conduct, let him be the object of your adoration, as God. While you love and admire his meekness, his patience, his benevolence — those qualities by which he seems to approach nearer to his creatures; confess also with the profoundest reverence his spotless purity; his exalted piety; that wisdom which spake as never man spake; that power which, though veiled under our flesh, yet subjected to its command both men and devils, the raging winds, the boisterous sea, and the whole course of nature. He has himself pronounced a blessing on those who, not having seen him, yet believe in him as their Lord and God. Blessed are they, if the word of

God be true, — blessed are true believers with all spiritual blessings (*a*): blessed with the pardon of their sins: blessed with the adoption of sons: blessed with a principle of life which directs and governs them: blessed with the victory that overcometh the world: blessed with the graces of the Holy Spirit: blessed with the promise of everlasting life.

III. This leads me to say a few words on the latter part of the Text, as I proposed: "That believing, ye may have life through his name:" that is, through him; for the name is in Scripture often put for the person himself. The doctrine taught in these words shows the importance of a true and steadfast belief in Jesus Christ; namely, that it is only for his sake, and by his means, that any man attains salvation, and eternal life. This is the plain doctrine of Scripture; delivered in express terms by the Apostle St. Peter before the rulers and elders of Israel. "Neither is there salvation by any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby

(*a*) See Bishop Beveridge's Sermon on John, xx. 29.

we must be saved." (*a*) Upon what, indeed, or upon whom, can we depend for salvation? Shall we trust in the mercy of God without regard to Christ? Then are we without a Redeemer, under the sentence originally denounced against sin, "Thou shalt surely die." The sentence remains in its full force against those who refuse to lay hold on the mercy of God in Christ. — Or shall we trust to ourselves, and our own works for salvation? Alas! he who knows not the corruption of his nature, his great sinfulness, and the imperfection even of his best actions, is yet in the darkness of ignorance. He who trusts to his own strength leans on a broken reed. Remember the faithful saying of St. Paul, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (*b*) It is only through his mercy, that we are regenerated in Baptism; by his Holy Spirit shed

(*a*) Acts, iv. 12. (*b*) Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7.

upon us, that we are continually renewed; by his grace, that we have hope of eternal life. Though our good works are *the condition*, they cannot be *the cause* of our everlasting salvation. Though, *for them, and according to them*, God will reward his faithful servants; yet it is only *for the sake of Christ*, and as they are the fruits of faith in him.

Look up to him, then, my brethren, as your God and Saviour, "that believing on him, you may have life through his name:" a spiritual life here, and life everlasting hereafter. They are both the gift of God through Christ; both are obtained by faith in him. "The life which I *now* live," saith St. Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (*a*) "He that believeth on the Son," saith Christ himself, "hath *everlasting* life." (*b*) By faith in the Son of God, then, walk in newness of life; dead unto sin, but living unto God; dead unto sin, that you may escape eternal death; living unto God, that you may live with him in glory. Let this true and saving faith be a ruling principle in your hearts, governing and directing your

(*a*) Gal. ii. 20. (*b*) John, iii. 36.

thoughts, words, and actions. You cannot have a steadier principle within you, nor a livelier motive to the practice of all righteousness, than a firm belief in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God. If you are ever tempted to question the truth of the Gospel, or to doubt its promises, remember that that Gospel has been revealed, and those promises made sure to you, by Him who cannot lie. Do you at any time sink under the thought of your corruptions and grievous sins? and do you fear lest it should be impossible for you to be saved? Think of that power and infinite mercy which he has already exerted in behalf of his creatures; and that he is still able and willing "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him." Are you, on the other hand, presumptuous, and inclined to boast of your own goodness? Meditate on his infinite perfections, and reflect how far you are removed from that divine holiness which was in him. In every state and condition, whether rejoicing or afflicted, whatever may be your hopes, and whatever your fears, do not forget him who is your Saviour and your God: dread nothing so

much as to be disowned by him; desire nothing so much as his everlasting favour; seek not your happiness elsewhere; but with your eyes steadily fixed on him, say with St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

SERMON III.

The Son of Man.

John, vi. 27.

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which the Son of Man will give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.

The manner in which our Lord has spoken of himself in this discourse is worthy of much attention;—the easy unaffected manner, in which he acknowledges his subjection to the Father, yet claims the honour due to himself, on account of his high office and heavenly original. He plainly declares, that "he is of God, and hath seen the Father; that he came down from heaven and giveth life unto the world; that all who believe on him shall have everlasting life,

and he will raise them up at the last day; and that the Son of Man shall ascend up where he was before." Yet he confesses that "he lives by the Father, and is sent by Him; that he is come not to do his own will, but the Father's that sent him, and that no man can come to him except it be given him of the Father." On the one hand you learn his pre-existence; on the other his human nature, and inferiority to the Father of all: you learn what is the office which he is appointed to execute; and from whom he has received his credentials: "Him hath God the Father sealed;" —hath authorised to dispense the bread of life; and confirmed his mission by the voice from heaven, and the power to work miracles. (*a*)

The phrase by which our Lord describes himself, "Son of Man," occurs three times in this discourse, and in no place is it unworthy of observation. The first is that in the text: and here the authority received from the Father evidently points out a particular office or errand on which the Son of

(*a*) See Parkhurst's Gr. Lex. et Wolfii Cur. Phil. in loc.

Man is employed. The term therefore is in this instance applied to one sent from God, and bearing a divine commission; — a commission, which could only be executed by taking human nature. — The second instance is a passage in which Jesus declares it to be necessary for every one to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, in order to obtain eternal life. Had he been one of the earth-born, corruptible race of those whom he addressed, they might have justly asked, " how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But that flesh was, as he told them, bread which came down from heaven, containing in it a principle of life and union with him, which should nourish them unto everlasting life. The whole discourse, which is of a mystical and spiritual kind, shows that the Son of Man who invited them to feed on his body and blood, though a man like themselves, was not of this world, but from above. — In the third passage our Lord tells us that the Son of Man shall " ascend up where he was before." Though now man, therefore, and living the life of men, he had been in heaven before he came upon earth. In

his conversation with Nicodemus, he speaks of himself as even then in heaven, and under the same title which he has here employed: "the Son of Man, which is in heaven." In his divine nature he was then with the Father: there was the place of his residence: when he inhabited a fleshly tabernacle and dwelt among us, he laid aside the glories of the Godhead, but the divine attributes he still retained: they are eternal, and immutable.

It should seem, then, that this title "Son of Man," while it evidently designates his human nature, is intended to convey the idea of something more than human. It is in truth the title by which our Lord usually speaks of himself; and whatever might have been the occasion of it, — whether it was expressive of his humility, whether it was intended to describe him as the second Adam, whether it pointed out his prophetical office, (that being the title by which God addresses the prophet Ezekiel,) or was adopted in allusion to a remarkable expression by Daniel (*a*), — it is applied to Him

(*a*) "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to

in a manner in which it could be applicable to no other among the sons of men, to Him in his character of Messiah or Christ. Thus, our Lord uses it when he describes himself as a Teacher, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man:" as a Saviour, "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;" as a Sacrifice, "the Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many."

But now, it was necessary that he who executed the office of Messiah, should possess a divine as well as a human nature. We may reasonably, therefore, expect to find in the title which we are considering a reference to that high original, by which he who bore it was distinguished from the rest of his brethren. And so it is; for "in a majority of the places in which our Saviour calls himself the Son of Man; (and he is never, in the New Testament, so called by

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the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him: and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." c. vii. 13.

others before his ascension) the allusion is either to his present humiliation, or to his future glory; and we have thus, though an indirect, yet a strong and perpetual declaration, that the human nature did not originally belong to him, and was not properly his own.' (*a*) We find that the Son of Man exercises divine prerogatives; he "hath power on earth to forgive sins," and dispenses with the appointed ordinances of God, being "Lord even of the Sabbath day." (*b*) We read that he shall hereafter come in his glory, and shall sit on the throne of his glory, and shall send his angels, to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and bring together his elect from one end of heaven to the other."(*c*)

It appears, then, that this title is appropriated to himself by Jesus Christ; and, in the sense in which he employed it, does not belong to any created being. He was foretold under this title by the Prophet Daniel, and is thus described by St. Stephen and St. John, when he appeared to the one

(*a*) Middleton on the Gr. Art. upon John, v. 17.
(*b*) Matt. ix. 6.; xii. 8.
(*c*) Matt. xiii. 41.; xxiv. 30.; xxv. 31.

immediately before his martyrdom(*a*), and to the other in vision in the island of Patmos.(*b*) Though this term may belong to all the other inhabitants of this earth, (as they are all descended from one common parent, and each inherits the nature of his father who begat him,) to Him (*c*) it was a peculiar appropriate title, designating his human nature, yet conveying an intimation of something more than human. It represented a divine Being in a state of weakness and humiliation. (*d*) When Christ declared that "the Son of Man hath power, upon earth to forgive sins (*e*)," did not his words convey the idea of a divine authority residing in a human form? And when to the solemn adjuration of the High Priest demanding if he were "the Christ the Son

(*a*) Acts, vii. 56.

(*b*) Rev. i. 13.; xiv. 14. In each passage the apostle has borrowed Daniel's expression.

(*c*) 'Son of Man,' says Bishop Horsley, 'is a title which belongs to the eternal Word, describing that person of the Godhead who was made man by uniting himself to the man Jesus.' Sermon on 1 John v. 6.

(*d*) Such is the full meaning of the term בר אנש which is used by Daniel, c. vii. 13.; for אנש properly implies a state of weakness and distress.

(*e*) Matt. ix. 6.

of the Blessed," he replied ; " I am ; and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven (*a*)," did not the expression imply an existence more than human, and a dignity to which no mere mortal can attain ? So at least it was understood by the Jewish Sanhedrim; for they all exclaimed, " Art thou then the son of God ?" And he said unto them, " Ye say that I am."(*b*) We have, then, in this title, the Son of Man, a proof of the Divinity of Him who assumed it ; a proof, not afforded by the title itself, but by the manner in which it is employed, and its peculiar application to our blessed Lord.

Here then, beloved, is taught the mysterious, but important doctrine, of *the Incarnation of Christ.* It is taught yet more plainly in those few words of St. John, " the Word was made flesh ;" and in various passages scattered through St. Paul's epistles ; " God was manifest in the flesh : God sent his Son made of a woman :

(*a*) Mark, xiv. 62. (*b*) Luke, xxii. 70, 71.

forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same: He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." It is circumstantially recorded by St. Matthew and St. Luke, in the first chapters of their Gospels, the one writing his history for the information of the Jews, the other for the Gentiles. Almost every page of the New Testament bears its witness to this truth, — that One of the persons of the Godhead took upon himself our nature, and became man for us.

The importance of this doctrine will be readily perceived, when you consider its necessary connection with every part of the Christian system; but above all with the doctrine of an atonement for sin. None but a Divine Person could reconcile a guilty race to an offended God. None else could be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. None else could offer a sacrifice of such unblemished purity, of such infinite value, that it should be avail-

able to remove the stains of original sin, and obtain pardon for multiplied and wilful transgressions; that it should turn anger to mercy, and procure grace more abundant than sin, — grace unto eternal life. Christ, therefore, was God. On the other hand, the whole history of Jesus, from his birth to his coming again to judgment, shows it to have been necessary, according to the Divine counsels, that he who was to perform the office of Mediator should partake of their nature who were to be brought unto God by him. Christ, therefore, was man. — If we ask the reason of so mysterious a dispensation, it must be ultimately referred to the will of the Most High. He who of his free mercy determined to receive fallen man to favour had a right to ordain the way in which the reconciliation should be effected. He who is possessed of infinite wisdom could alone decide on the fitness of the means employed. If you enquire, therefore, why Christ was God and Man, you must carry your investigation further, and ask why it pleased the Deity to redeem his creatures? why he saw fit to accept a satisfaction and an atonement for their

sins? But if it be clear from Scripture, that he has provided an atonement and intercession, then we can discover sufficient reason why the Anointed One, charged with so high an office, should be God Incarnate.

In a former discourse I proved the *divinity* of Jesus Christ. His life and death, his actions and sufferings, his discourses, his resurrection and ascension in a bodily shape, together with the promise that he shall so come in like manner as he went into heaven, sufficiently attest his *humanity.* Let me now proceed to show that it was necessary for the due execution of his various offices, that he should have in his own person both natures intimately and inseparably united.

1. Of these offices the first and most important was, to make a sin-offering for us, " that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Now, as, on the one hand, it was requisite that He who was to offer himself in sacrifice should " know no sin," — and hence we find the Apostles express in showing that the " Lamb by whose pre-

cious blood-shedding we have been redeemed, was without blemish and without spot;" and that "in Him who was manifested to take away our sins, — in Him was no sin:" — as it was requisite, I say, that the sin-offering should be perfectly holy, and therefore could not be taken from among any, even the purest, of the creatures; so, on the other hand, it is manifest that the Deity is incapable of suffering; it is manifest, too, that it was part of the divine scheme that the atonement should be made in that nature which had offended. What then remains, but that one of the persons of the Godhead should unite to himself that nature; and, becoming the representative of sinners, yet possessing the spotless purity and availing merit of the Deity, should offer "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world?" You see, then, that for the fulfilment of the divine purpose of making an atonement it was necessary that "God should be manifest in the flesh;" for otherwise how could "he purchase the church with his own blood?" (*a*)

(*a*) Acts, xx. 28.

2. As it was necessary, according to the will of God, that the Messiah should suffer, it was also decreed that he should rise again. Hence our Lord taught his disciples "that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and be killed, and after three days rise again." His resurrection was necessary on many accounts; necessary "for our justification (*a*);" necessary for an assurance of our resurrection; necessary to prove the truth of the Gospel; for it has pleased the Holy Spirit to rest the proof (*b*) of our religion chiefly on this fact, that Jesus rose from the dead. Now, "by the resurrection," as St. Paul tells us, Jesus Christ is "declared (*c*)," or rather is clearly and determinately marked out, "to be the Son of God." And is it not from hence equally certain that he was man? And was it not necessary that he should be so? It was necessary that he should be man, that his dead body might be restored to life: it was necessary that he should be God, that, being raised from the dead, he might die no more, and death have no

(*a*) Rom. iv. 25.
(*b*) See St. Peter's first sermon, Acts, ii. 1 Cor. xv. et al.
(*c*) Rom. i. 4.

more dominion over him. So, again, in respect of the benefits which we derive from his resurrection, it was necessary that he should be God, that he might afford full and consoling proof of our justification; that he should be man, in order to be the pledge and first-fruits of our resurrection.

3. The same will appear if we consider his office as a Prophet or Teacher. One of the rich blessings and exalted privileges which we enjoy under the Gospel dispensation is, that we have a perfect law, and a perfect pattern of obedience to it. That law might have been given in whatever manner God saw fit; it might have been revealed from heaven, or taught upon earth; it might have been delivered by an inspired mortal, or by a heavenly messenger. It is manifest, however, that a powerful motive is presented for love, gratitude, and steady obedience, when God having in times past spoken by his Prophets, speaks at last by his Son. That law brings with it a commanding authority, and an assurance of consummate excellence, which the Son of God himself enjoins. — But if the law had been promulgated in some other manner, how

could a pattern of obedience to it have been exhibited, unless by a human being? How could that pattern have been perfect, unless he who exhibited it were divine? The example of Jesus Christ is one of the most extraordinary parts of the Christian scheme. His entire submission to the Father, while at the same time he displayed divine power; his expressing all the finest feelings of our nature, neither disturbed by passion, nor weakened by indulgence; these, with the most absolute and undeviating perfection in the practice of all virtue, make up an object to be contemplated with admiration and love, and with continual advancement in holiness. Let us, then, thankfully acknowledge that goodness which has given us so excellent a system of laws, and so beautiful an example; and at the same time has afforded assurance of the authority of the one, and the finished excellence of the other, by uniting the Godhead with the manhood in Christ Jesus.

4. Our Lord has not only given us his laws for our rule, and his life for our pattern; but he has likewise given us his flesh for the food of our souls. Not in the gross

and earthly view adopted by the Romanist, who imagines that in the sacrament of the mass he sees before him the visible body of Christ, and presses it with his teeth. Our belief is, that the worthy receiver "spiritually eats the flesh of Christ and drinks his blood" in the Lord's Supper, and thereby becomes "one with Christ, and dwelleth in him." These words of our Lord have indeed been interpreted in such a sense as to exclude all allusion to the sacrament of his Supper. Half their force is thereby lost, when the feeding upon him is supposed to be purely spiritual, not sacramental. The difference, however, is not very material in our present consideration of the subject.

To be united to our Lord is the highest and most blessed privilege which the creatures can attain. Now, this union is to be effected, according to his own words, by feeding on his body and blood. The same divine food is the principle of a new, a spiritual, an everlasting life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

Whatever, then, be the nature of this union, — spiritual it is, and therefore cannot be comprehended by us, — our Saviour's words imply that it is with Him, in his human nature (*a*), that the disciple is united; and through that nature exalted and glorified, with the Deity. All the graces and blessings and spiritual gifts which we receive from above are bestowed for the sake of

(*a*) See Jackson's Works, book ii. chap. 3. 'The only sure anchor of all our hopes for a joyful resurrection unto a life of glory, is the *mystical union* which will be wrought here on earth between *Christ's human nature* glorified, and our mortal and dissoluble nature. The *Divine nature*, indeed, is the *prime fountain of life* to all; but, though inexhaustible in itself, yet a fountain whereof we cannot drink, save as it is derived unto us through the *human nature* of Christ.'

'As God the Father doth neither give nor vouchsafe reconciliation, but for the merits and satisfaction of his *only Son;* so neither will he vouchsafe to convey this, or any other blessing unto us, which his Son hath purchased for us, but only *through his Son*, not only through Him as our Advocate and Intercessor, but through Him as our Mediator, that is, through *His humanity*, as the organ or conduit, or as the only bond by which we are united and reconciled unto the Divine nature. For although the Holy Spirit, or third Person in the Trinity, doth immediately and by personal propriety work faith and other spiritual graces in our souls, yet doth he not by these spiritual graces unite our souls or spirits immediately unto himself, but unto Christ's human nature.' See more in the next chapter upon John, vi. 56.

Christ — are bestowed through Christ. He, uniting in himself the divine and human nature, is the Mediator between the goodness of God and the wants of man; and never shall mercy descend from the throne of heaven to bless a sinful race, but through Him, by whom reconciliation was effected and pardon procured. For the sake, then, of uniting us to himself, and conveying to us that grace which we so greatly need; it was necessary that the Son of God should become as one of us, and take our nature to himself.

5. And this leads to the consideration of a very high and important office executed by Jesus since his ascension into the heavens: — that of Intercessor. In that character he continues to discharge the priestly function, upon which he entered while upon earth. Here he offered a sacrifice for the sins of his people; there he presents the blood upon the mercy-seat before the cherubim: here he made the atonement; there he intercedes for those whom he hath redeemed: here he purchased grace and help for their succour in time of need; there he sends down that Spirit which was "the

promise of the Father," and one high reward of his obedience unto death. As, then, the Son of God consented to become lower than the angels, that he might "taste death for every man;" so, in order to carry forward the great work, he did not lay aside our nature, but sate down as man at the right hand of the throne of God. This is the argument of the Apostle, who thus speaks, assuming the divinity of our Lord, which he had proved in the former chapter: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death;" and "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—The Apostle has furnished moreover another reason why the Saviour and Intercessor should be a partaker of our nature,—a reason which, without his authority, we should scarcely perhaps have ventured to entertain; namely, that "he might be a merciful," as well as a "faithful High Priest;" not one which cannot be touched with a feeling of our in-

firmities, but one which hath been in all points tempted like as we are; and hath suffered, being tempted: who is therefore able to succour them that are tempted." These last expressions are very remarkable. What! did not even the perfect knowledge which the Deity possesses suffice to make him acquainted with the wants and feelings of his creatures? Was not infinite mercy awake at the call of those who are suffering under the assaults of the evil one? Could there be reason to fear lest divine justice should make its demands with excessive rigour? Oh! my brethren, admire, I beseech you, that goodness which brought the Son of God from the throne of heaven, that he might compassionate human weakness; and acknowledge that in the divine counsels it was deemed expedient that God should unite with man to form a perfect intercessor.

6. The same union has been decreed by infinite wisdom in Him who is appointed to be Judge of quick and dead. The power and right to execute judgment resides, like all supreme power, in the Deity. But the particular exercise of that power at the last

great day has been committed by the Father to the Son; and for this especial reason, "because he is the Son of Man." (*a*) Not, as some would render the words, because he is a son of man, that is, a mere man; for how can a fallible man judge the world? No; but because he is THE SON OF MAN; God incarnate. —He, uniting in himself the perfections of the godhead with sympathy for his fellow-men, is peculiarly qualified to execute judgment under that dispensation, in every part of which "mercy and truth meet together." And this gracious appointment, as it is full of consolation to us in the thought that in that great and terrible day, we shall look upon the face of One who "is not ashamed to call us brethren;" so is it likewise a demonstration of the justice of the Father, that he will 'cause all men to bow down before his throne, who did not disdain for their sakes to stand before an earthly tribunal, and receive that sentence, "Let him be crucified." (*b*)

(*a*) John, v. 27. See Middleton on the Gr. Art.

(*b*) Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. vii. He shall come to judge. See also his remarks on the passage in St. John, quoted above.

In this title, then, the Son of Man, assumed by our Saviour, and evidently distinguishing him from others of the human race, you see before you a proof of that leading doctrine of our religion, the *Incarnation of the Son of God.* And if your thoughts, my brethren, ascend in any proportion to the dignity of the subject, or its interesting nature excites corresponding feelings in your hearts, you will not deem the time or labour misapplied, which may be given to investigations such as these. For in the Incarnation of Christ you see infinite wisdom providing a satisfaction for divine justice, in such a manner as to excite the offender to love, to gratitude, to the practice of holiness: you see, not the beginning only of man's redemption, but a principle which pervades all the parts and circumstances of it: for you see that whether the Son of Man appears as a Teacher, or a Saviour; whether he offers an atonement; or calls the nations to his judgment-seat; for the due execution of every office, an union of the divine with the human nature is absolutely necessary. How low, then, how cold, how uninteresting are those

views of our religion, which would sink the Redeemer of mankind to a level with those lost creatures whom he came to seek and to save; and by banishing the doctrine of a propitiatory sacrifice, would throw away the most powerful incentive to generous feeling, elevated piety, undissembled humility, and unwearied love! Be watchful then, lest you be tempted to separate the divine and human nature in Christ Jesus. Be upon your guard, lest you be induced by any specious arguments to question the truth of His incarnation; remembering that if God was not manifest in the flesh, ye are yet in your sins unatoned, and therefore unpardoned. Range in thought, as you will, through all the marvellous works of God; meditate, as you will, on all his glorious attributes; let the various proofs of his loving-kindness excite your gratitude; but let this be ever present to your minds as the greatest of his works, and the highest instance of his love, that He who is "the King of glory, and the everlasting Son of the Father, when he took upon him to deliver man, did not abhor the virgin's womb."

SERMON IV.

The Seed of the Woman.

Genesis, iii. 15.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This is part of the sentence which the Lord God passed upon the serpent, or rather, upon the evil spirit under the form of that animal, for having seduced our first parents from their duty to their Maker. The whole of God's proceedings on this interesting occasion exhibits most remarkably the union of justice with mercy, of hatred for sin with tender compassion for the offender. It will be our wisdom to

consider attentively the events recorded in this third chapter of Genesis, if we wish to know the ground-work of our religion, and the cause of Christ's coming into the world; if we would be acquainted with the nature of man, or of God's dealings with his creatures. I shall at present set before you the circumstances which attended the fall of Adam; and thus will appear the sad consequences of departing from God, — the weakness of man, — the art and strength of the tempter, — the beginning of sin and of death, — the beginning too of our deliverance from both, — and the necessity of gratitude to the Father of mercies, and firm faith in Jesus Christ our Redeemer. In order to understand the history of the fall of man, it is necessary to look back, and consider the state in which he was created.

When God had made the heavens and the earth, the former shining with its glorious lights, the latter covered with trees and herbs and animals, He then, in the last place, as if he was putting the finishing hand to his work of creation, formed man;

formed him in his own image, in the image and after the likeness of God. See here, my brethren, the excellent condition of man, when he came from the hand of his Maker. His body indeed was made of the dust of the ground. But his better part, his spirit, was after the likeness of Him who gave it. It came from above; it was pure and holy; clean from all spot of sin; just and upright. His mind was, no doubt, endowed with the noblest faculties, his heart with the best affections. He was, in short, such that his Maker could contemplate him with pleasure, — worthy of being called "the son of God." (*a*) We cannot think too highly of him whom the great God, upon beholding his work, pronounced to be "very good."

Adam, when made, was placed in a garden, called the garden of Eden, or delight; which "the Lord God planted" for him, and adorned with "every tree which is pleasant to the sight or good for food." Here he enjoyed probably the highest pleasure of which our nature is capable upon earth:

(*a*) Luke, iii. 38.

his body in health; his mind engaged in heavenly contemplation; his hands employed in dressing the garden, which produced its fruits according to the original blessing and command of God; the animals in subjection to his dominion. He felt no misery: for he knew no sin. He was a stranger even to the feeling of shame which a knowledge of sin has brought with it. He enjoyed moreover the high honour and delight of intimate converse with his Maker. — Such was Adam in Paradise, before the woman, weaker perhaps than himself, listened to the seduction of the Tempter, and lost the enjoyment of perfect good, in a vain desire to know good and evil.

Paradise was planted by God; yet there we see the serpent. The Devil, taking the form of that animal, engaged the attention of the woman. What wonder if we find him about our path and in our closet, when Paradise was not free from him! (*a*) His art was subtle, his language was bold, his

(*a*) Bishop Hall.

promises fair and specious; and he succeeded too well in seducing our unhappy parents from the allegiance which they owed to God.

What was the consequence of this? First, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and were ashamed. They had lost their inward purity; and they now became ashamed of that nakedness, of which, in a state of innocence, they had, like infants, scarce been conscious. — What was the next sad consequence of their transgression? They were afraid to meet their Maker. "They hid themselves from the face of the Lord God." Man in a state of innocence, or full of faith, and practising righteousness, takes delight in approaching to God; like the angels who stand in His presence, and hearken unto the voice of his word. But consciousness of sin takes from him that pious courage, that humble confidence, that filial affection; he is afraid, and trembles at the thought of his Father's presence. How deadly must be the nature of sin, which makes a man fly from the source of all good!

And here I would beg you to observe, how it has pleased God to ordain, that this world should be always a state of trial. Though he made man after his own image pure and holy, and capable of all good; yet he did not make him secure from falling into sin. He ordained that his creature should undergo a trial, before he was rewarded with everlasting happiness; a trial of his faith by his obedience. He suffered our first parents to be tempted; and in that temptation they fell.— As they were placed in a state of trial, so are all their posterity. We all are capable of attaining salvation, but liable to fall. Our faith is tried by our works. Let us learn, then, to be constantly upon our guard, since temptation always besets us; let us arm ourselves with pious faith and trust in Him who is mighty to save; and let us strengthen our faith by daily intercourse with him, and earnest application to him in prayer; impressing our hearts with a full conviction how wretched must be our state, if our sins should make us desirous to hide ourselves from his all-seeing eye.

What is the lesson which we are taught by the circumstances of Adam's fall? The weakness of man, and the strength of the Tempter. Our first parents, though placed in Paradise, ignorant of sin, and enjoying familar intercourse with God, yet yielded to the temptation, believed the serpent rather than God, and disobeyed a positive command. How little reason, my brethren, have we to depend on our own strength, when they who were so much stronger than we, did not stand in the day of trial! How should we fear for ourselves who are compassed with so many infirmities, when they who then knew no sin were so easily seduced from the path of virtue!

The evil of Adam's transgression did not end with him. It corrupted his nature. He begat a son, we are told, in his own likeness. Not, as he was at first formed, in the image of God, but such as he then was, in the likeness of sinful man. That nature so corrupted, that likeness so deformed, descended to his posterity: all men have been born in sin, and children of that wrath of God which Adam brought

upon himself. By one man's disobedience mankind were made sinners. (*a*) Here, then, you trace the origin of the natural corruption and sinfulness of men: here you learn the doctrine of original sin. Had our first parent continued innocent, his children would have been innocent like him. But he fell from his uprightness, and all his posterity have inherited his depraved nature. All of us are born into the world with sinful dispositions, and a heart inclined to evil. And, notwithstanding the grace of God given us at our baptism, and that continual supply with which he renews his servants day by day, this depravity and corruption still remains even in the faithful; it continually solicits them to evil; it taints their best actions; and is never entirely subdued, until the spirit is released from the body.

Having considered Adam's sin, let us now observe his punishment. The sentence passed upon him was this: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou

(*a*) Rom. v. 19.

eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Here, then, you see also the origin of all the misery which befals the sons of men. It began with the transgression of their first parent. His soul becoming corrupt, his body likewise was changed; and was made subject to disease, and sufferings, and death. The world in the same moment was disordered. The beasts renounced his authority, and became wild. The earth no longer brought forth its fruits of itself. It even repaid the labour bestowed upon it with thorns and thistles. And man, instead of passing his hours in the contemplation of his Maker, was obliged to labour for his daily food; and to endure those many evils and calamities, which he would have never known, had he continued innocent.

See the dreadful effects of sin. See how it turned out of its course the stream of divine goodness, and altered the whole con-

stitution of nature. Man was innocent, and he was happy: He fell into sin, and the same day which saw him guilty saw him wretched. All the avenues to complete happiness on this side the grave were closed for ever. Labour, and sorrow, and pain, and death, became his portion in this world; and the portion of his posterity to the end of time. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (*a*) All have become sinful by Adam's transgression; and all have unhappily rendered themselves still more guilty in the sight of God by many actual sins, much wilful disobedience. The labour and pain, the distress and sorrow, which we suffer in this life, are the consequence of Adam's sin, and the punishment of our own.

But are worldly sorrow and temporal death the only effects of Adam's fall? — There is another world; and his portion in that world was forfeited, no less than his happiness in this. Nothing that is unholy can enter into the presence of God. Sinners,

(*a*) Rom. v. 12.

— unrepenting sinners, — must have their portion with him who is the author of sin. Adam, therefore, and all his posterity, became liable to the wrath of God hereafter, as well as here. "The lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" — this was the most terrible part of the punishment; this was the death of the soul which was threatened in that awful denunciation, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" that is, thou shalt surely become subject to death temporal and eternal.

"The wages of sin, then, is death." Everlasting banishment from Him who is the author of life, — everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels; — these must have been the consequence of sin in every man, if the atonement had not been made by Jesus Christ; — these must still be the portion of all those who reject His atonement, and refuse the salvation offered them.

Having considered the fall of man, and the punishment of his sin, let us now turn to the more cheering side of the picture,

and consider how the goodness of the Creator shielded him from destruction. The good God in judgment remembers mercy, and before he pronounced sentence upon the offender, he made known the remedy which he had provided from all eternity. This is to be found in the sentence passed upon the serpent. "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." We shall, perhaps, best understand this remarkable sentence, if we suppose it to be addressed to the serpent, and to the devil concealed under the form of that animal. As addressed to the former, it is to be understood literally, condemning that which perhaps was before a nobler animal, to crawl upon its belly, and eat dust for food; and foretelling that enmity which always subsists between man and a serpent; the serpent endeavouring to bite the heel of man, while

man on the other hand strikes the serpent on the head and destroys him.

But this remarkable passage has, no doubt, a higher meaning. The serpent, thus really under curse from God, was the evil spirit which had just effected the ruin of our first parents. And who was the seed of the woman? who, but He who was born of a virgin, and made man for us? Jesus Christ the righteous, — he who was alone without sin, — he who, though clothed in our flesh, was yet possessed of divine power, — who was not (like the first Adam) made after the likeness of God, but was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," — in whom "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," — he was able to rescue man from the great destroyer; — He, though smitten and wounded, even to death, was thereby enabled to destroy death, and him that had the power of death the devil; — He was wounded for this very purpose; bruised in the heel, that he might bruise the serpent's head. — The sentence passed upon the serpent is a most striking prophecy of the salvation to be wrought by Jesus Christ. He,

in the fulness of time, came upon earth to appease the wrath of God, and restore man to his favour. — The devil, like the strong man in the parable, had obtained power over the bodies and souls of men. But the Seed of the woman drove him from his strong-hold, vanquished him in the temptation in the wilderness, and cast him out from those persons who were possessed by him. Our blessed Lord was bruised in the heel; — he received a wound, and was even brought to a shameful death, by the serpent and his seed: — those wicked men who were a "generation of vipers." But by that very death salvation was brought to men; and by his rising again he "spoiled principalities and powers" and "the rulers of the darkness of this world," and "led captivity captive." Thus has this Seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head; — he has inflicted a deadly wound. But the great day is yet to come, when "the dragon shall be cast out, that old serpent," that his place may be found no more on earth, as it is not now in heaven, and he shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Then shall a better paradise be opened to the faithful servants of Christ,

and he "will give to them to eat of the tree of life." (*a*) Then shall they appear once more after the image of him that created them, and shall be indeed the sons of God. Even before that great and terrible day of the Lord's vengeance against his enemies, a time shall perhaps come when the "nations shall rejoice with his people; a period of peace and glory to the Church, when Christ shall reign among his saints, and shall restore all things as at the beginning; when, in the beautiful language of prophecy, "the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose; instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: but dust shall be the serpent's meat." (*b*) The punishment denounced against him shall continue in force: he shall never lift up his head from the earth.

The reflections which suggest themselves from this part of the history are many and important. I shall content myself with requesting you to consider the Messiah in the

(*a*) Rev. ii. 7. (*b*) Isa. lxv. 25.

three characters in which he is here presented to you; as *the Seed of the woman; the Redeemer of mankind;* and *the Enemy of sin, and of the devil who is the author of sin.*

I. The Messiah is here set before you as *the Seed of the woman.* Not indeed born after the manner of men; but born of a pure virgin — born without spot of sin: made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. Why was he made man? That he might conquer the great enemy of mankind in the same nature which had formerly been conquered by him: that he might instruct his fellow-men, both by precept and by example: that he might suffer that death for man which man had brought upon himself by his sins: that he might give us the fullest assurance of salvation and reconciliation to God, by passing in our nature into the heavens, and sitting down, as man, on the right hand of the Father. All the dealings of God with men in Christ Jesus are purposes of mercy. It was out of his infinite loving-kindness for his creatures that he was pleased to manifest himself in

our flesh. Thus he became the second Adam, to remedy those evils by his righteousness, which the sin of the first Adam had brought upon mankind: "that as sin had reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

Behold, then, the goodness and condescension of the Son of God in becoming man for our sakes. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" — How unworthy is a body, formed of the dust of the earth, to receive the holy God! How was it rendered yet more unworthy, after it had been debased by sin! Yet "in the likeness of sinful flesh God was pleased to send his own Son, that he might condemn sin in the flesh." In that flesh the Most High was pleased to endure temptation, to suffer pain and shame, sorrow and death — all the evils which men deserved to suffer. — How can we sufficiently admire the loving-kindness of God in this his humiliation? How can we sufficiently endeavour to form ourselves after the image of the second Adam in holiness, as we have unhappily been

born after the likeness of the first Adam in sin?

II. You here see the Son of God in the character of *the Redeemer of mankind:* who hath purchased our deliverance, who hath saved us out "of the lion's mouth,"—that lion, who "goeth about seeking whom he may devour." It is, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, that we have received the atonement," that we are "saved from wrath," and "brought nigh unto God." What devout joy should fill our hearts, what pious gratitude should flow from our lips, while we meditate on this great deliverance! —the joy of slaves and captives whose life has been redeemed from destruction—the gratitude of those whose freedom has been purchased by a price more than man could give.

And how far has this gracious salvation extended? As widely, no doubt, as the destruction had spread. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." (*a*) "As by the offence of one, judgment came

(*a*) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (*a*) By the sin of Adam, our first parent, the whole world became subject to the wrath of God: by the precious blood-shedding of Christ, our Redeemer, the whole world was restored to God's favour, and made capable of everlasting salvation. This is the uniform language of Scripture — the doctrine taught by the Spirit of God from one end of the Bible to the other. You see it most clearly in the passage which we have been considering. For why was the promise of a Redeemer given to Adam; but that he might be assured of such a salvation, as would do away the ill effects of his own transgression; a salvation, by which all his posterity might rise and recover their lost estate, as they had fallen in him?

Receive this then, I entreat you, as a most certain truth, — as certain as it is full of comfort, — that the blood of Christ has been shed for all men, — that it is his own fault, if any suffers under the wrath of God,

(*a*) Rom. v. 17.

From the first man that was made, to the last that shall be born, all have it in their power to obtain everlasting salvation: — so precious in the sight of the Father is the death of his beloved Son: — so full, so perfect, so extensive, is the redemption made by Christ.

III. The third character in which our blessed Lord is here represented to us, is that of *the Enemy of sin, and of the Devil the author of sin.* The Seed of the woman is placed in a state of enmity with the serpent and his seed; enmity is put between them by God himself. How indeed could it be otherwise? how could there be friendship or reconciliation between light and darkness, between truth and falsehood, between heaven and hell? Christ therefore was revealed to Adam as the enemy of sin, and of Satan; and this character he preserved when he came upon earth. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil." (*a*) His life was employed in opposing

(*a*) 1 John, iii. 8.

the prince of darkness, and he triumphed over that evil spirit on the cross.—Such as he is—such also are his disciples. As he is the enemy of sin, so also are they. This is the mark of the children of God, and the children of the evil one. "He that committeth sin is of the devil: whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God; every one that doth righteousness is born of him." (*a*)

Here, then, Christians, is a test, by which to try yourselves. None but the children of God, as you well know, can be heirs of eternal life.—How will you know if you are the sons of God? St. John has given you the rule which I have just read to you: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God."—He sets before you two parties—God, the author of all good; and the Devil, the author of all evil. As long as you live in the practice of wickedness, so long you are children of the evil one. And you have

(*a*) 1 John, ii. 29. iii. 8, 9, 10.

no right to call yourselves sons of God, (for you cannot show any resemblance to him), till you have ceased to do evil, and learned to do well. Observe, it is not the committing a single act of sin, that will make a man a child of the devil. There is no man that liveth and sinneth not. It is the living in any known sin,—the consenting to it,— the (*a*) practising of unrighteousness, —the being a wilful and habitual sinner ;— it is this that marks a man as one of the generation of vipers — of the seed of the evil one.—On the other hand, it is not a single virtuous act that will give a man a right to call himself a child of God. He must live in the daily practice of virtue. He must cherish in his heart the most lively feelings of love to his heavenly Father ; and must show that love by having respect unto all his commandments. As each of us has been made the child of God

(*a*) John, viii. 34. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Πας ὁ ποιων ἁμαρτιαν. 'Not every one who commiteth sin, or more sins than one ; but every one that is *a committer of sin*, or *a worker of iniquity*, is the servant of sin.' Dr. T. Jackson's Works, v. iii. p. 18.—The phrase implies a custom and habit of sinning, as Hardy observes in his note on the place.

in baptism, we must beware lest we forfeit that honourable title and blessed privilege by wilful disobedience.

And now, brethren, I might say to you, as Joshua said to the Israelites, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." But let me employ a nobler image, and address you not as servants, but as sons; sons of the most high God, and brethren of Christ. The highest honour which you can possibly attain is to be conformed to the image of Him who is the beloved of the Father, and "the first-born among many brethren." Remember, then, that this is one of the characters under which he appears, the very first time that he is mentioned in Scripture, —as the great Enemy of Satan and of sin. As long as you continue in sin, you cannot be his friends, much less his brethren. You do not bear his image,—you have not his mind,—you are not moved by his Spirit, unless you live in the constant practice of righteousness and true holiness. As children of Adam, your nature is corrupt, your passions and appetites are depraved and inclined to sin. But being made children of

God, and joint-heirs with Christ, you are now washed and sanctified; you have a heavenly, instead of an earthly parent; you have a more perfect pattern than Adam could have exhibited even in the day of his innocence; you are possessed of higher privileges than any which you could have derived from him; you are called to a happier paradise than that which he enjoyed. Let it be your constant and most earnest endeavour, my brethren, to recover that divine image of holiness, which your first father lost, that you may obtain a greater blessedness than that which he forfeited. "Beloved," saith St. John, "now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (*a*) If we would see God as he is in heaven, we must steadily contemplate what he was upon earth. If we would be like him in glory hereafter, we must resemble him in holiness here.

(*a*) 1 John, iii. 2.

SERMON V.

The Desire of all Nations.

Hag. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;
And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts.
The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.
The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.

It is satisfactory to learn that this remarkable prophecy was always supposed by the ancient Jews to relate to the advent of the Messiah. This is satisfactory, because there

is a little difficulty in the construction of those words, " the desire of all nations shall come;" and of any difficulty in the construction of their language, those who spoke it should be the best judges; but still more, because the accomplishment of the events here foretold is limited to the existence of that temple which was rising upon the ruins of the former when Haggai addressed the Jews. The prophecy therefore must have been fulfilled, at least in its primary sense, (for it is possible that a future advent attended with circumstances of far greater splendour may be shadowed out and typified,) but in its first and obvious sense the prophecy was fulfilled, — the heavens and earth were shaken, the desire of all nations came, that house was filled with glory, and peace was given there, before the destruction of the temple and city by the Roman armies. I do not see therefore how they who apply this prediction to the advent of Christ, can resist the conclusion that He is already come.

To us indeed this prediction acquires greater interest and importance from its being introduced by St. Paul in his eloquent

address to the Hebrew Christians: "see that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which were shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." (*a*) Here St. Paul evidently supposes the prophecy to be fulfilled, the Jewish law which was given on earth to be abrogated, and the Christian dispensation established in its stead; — a dispensation more spiritual in its nature, which was taught by the Son of God himself, and is only the beginning upon earth of that which

(*a*) Heb. xii. 25., &c.

will be perfected in heaven. Upon apostolical authority, then, we may venture to say that this prophecy is accomplished, and consequently that "the Desire of all nations" is come, and has established a dispensation which will know no end, a kinddom which cannot be moved.

It is remarkable that the prophet in foretelling the glory of the second temple should describe the Messiah as the Desire *of all nations;* whose coming was an object of expectation, not only among the Jews, but among the Gentiles also. Those partial and contracted feelings which made his people in later times desire to exclude the rest of the world from a share in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, were unknown to him. He foresaw a salvation which should reach to the end of the earth; provided for all those by whom it was so greatly needed. Such it is described by the older prophets. Thus Jehovah addresses Messiah by the mouth of Isaiah. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also

give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth. I give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. The Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (*a*) And if we look back, as we shall presently find occasion to do, to the earliest prophecies which are recorded, we shall see that the blessing promised from the beginning was to extend to all nations of the earth.

The character under which Christ appears in the text, as " the Desire of all nations," naturally leads us to consider the need which all nations had of a Redeemer, and the expectation which had been raised in the world previous to Christ's appearing.

1. Upon the former of these heads a few words will suffice. No one can look abroad into the state of the world, either as it is recorded in history, or reported by travellers of the present day, without seeing with grief and horror their general ignorance of God; their devotion to idolatry; their

(*a*) Isa. xlii. 6.; xlix. 6.; lx. 3.

ignorance of a future state; and their vicious practices, particularly their impurity and cruelty. When I speak of their ignorance of God, I mean their ignorance of him as he really is. And how lamentable is it to reflect that perhaps one only of the ancient philosophers believed in the unity of the Godhead; and that he, though gifted with extraordinary wisdom and penetration, — endowments which he employed to the best purposes, — yet consented to worship the false gods of his country, and hesitated in doubt respecting the state of his soul after its departure from the body! How lamentable is it to think, though at the same time it affords occasion of devout gratitude, that the most illiterate peasant or the youngest child, as soon as he is instructed in the articles of his belief, has reached an excellence in religious knowledge which all the sages of antiquity could not attain!

If from hence we lead you to the morality of the heathens, how dreary or how disgusting is our report! How are we amazed to read of vices commonly practised, which, as the apostle saith, it is a shame even to speak of! of vices consecrated by the holy

name of religion, and admitted within the sanctuary of the Deity! How do we turn with horror from tales of cruelty, not only among barbarous nations, but among the most civilized states; not in their infancy only, but when they were decorated with art and science; — of cruelty to hapless individuals, or dooming a whole people to slavery or the sword!

Now in these instances in which the nations of the world so greatly needed a divine instructor, the religion of Jesus was peculiarly calculated to supply their wants; to remove their ignorance, to purify their hearts, to soften their ferocity. It is manifest that with the preaching of the Gospel a change was effected, like that which is wrought by the mightiest powers of the natural world. The thunder of God shook the empire of idolatry to its foundations; a divine light dispelled the thick shades of darkness; the wilderness was turned into a fruitful field; the fiercest animals laid aside their savage nature, and became tame like the kid and the lamb. Had our Lord and his apostles merely disseminated through the world the principles of faith and prac-

tice which had been delivered to the peopl of Israel, it had been a blessing worthy of all acceptation. But Christ did much more. He removed the types and emblems under which the truth was shadowed out. He distinctly taught the Unity of the Godhead, and the Trinity in that Unity. He inculcated a pure and spiritual worship. He revealed his own nature, and the great end of his coming into the world, the offering of himself as a sacrifice for sin. He shewed the need of assistance from the Holy Spirit, and promised that assistance. He brought life and immortality to light, giving to the doctrine of a future resurrection, an extent and a certainty which was before unknown. And how pure and elevated was his code of moral law! enjoining a holiness like that of the Deity, and the cleansing of the thoughts and the heart from all sin; forbidding all cruelty and revenge; and inculcating a meek and gentle disposition, a readiness to forgive, and a love, which founded upon the love of God to man, and taking that for its pattern, extends its benevolence to friends and to enemies, to every nation and kindred and people and tongue!

— Thus much may at present suffice, to point out the need which both Jews and Gentiles had of One who should reconcile them to God, and bring them to a knowledge of the truth.

II. Let us now proceed to the second part of the subject, and consider that expectation of a Redeemer which subsisted previous to Christ's appearing.

It has pleased God, not only, as the Apostle saith, never to leave himself without witness,—so that in the midst of thick darkness we find some remarkable traces of divine truth; but in various ways, by secret influence on the minds of men, by traditionary remains of the patriarchal religion, or by diffusing his holy word through the hands of the Jewish people, to prepare the way for the advent of his Son. Thus we find every where prevailing an idea of the need of a mediator between God and man, either to reveal the will of the former, or to render the prayers and offerings of the latter acceptable. The confession of the wisest philosophers, that the Deity must himself reveal his will if it is to be known,

deserves to be quoted, as shewing not only the strong sense which they had of their own ignorance, but that their minds easily received the idea of a revelation from God. This idea the Almighty suffered to be promulgated also by means of oracles, auguries, divinations. Nor perhaps should we pass over without notice the remains of historic truth in the sacred ceremonies of various nations. For these, though not immediately pointing to the Messiah, might tend to prepare his way, inasmuch as they impressed the minds of the people with a certain religious awe, and by shewing the better informed among them in how much of mystery both their religion and their history were enveloped, might lead them to desire the presence of an instructor, who should remove the veil and satisfy their enquiries.

To come yet nearer to the point before us, look where you will, you find a notion prevailing that it is necessary to propitiate the Deity by offerings, and for the most part by sacrifices of blood, nay by human sacrifices. (*a*) That man should so conceive

(*a*) For the prevalence of human sacrifices among the

of the Supreme Being, as of one who could take delight in human blood, seems unaccountable, except by tracing the notion to the highest source, and viewing in these disgusting rites a perverted emblem of that precious blood-shedding as an atonement for the sins of the whole world, which was celebrated by sacrifice among the faithful from the days of Adam, and was remarkably pre-figured in the offering of his only son by the patriarch Abraham.

If, again, you look toward the East, where you may most reasonably expect to find some remnant of patriarchal history, or some allusion to the leading doctrines of Scripture, you not only discover much to excite investigation, but more particularly you see a triad of Divine Persons, and frequent incarnations of the second of these Persons; in one of which, you find him trampling on the head of a serpent, which is elsewhere represented in the act of biting his heel. (*a*)

Pagans, see Leland's Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation. Part. i. c. vii.

(*a*) Mr. Maurice, in his Ancient History of Hindoostan,

From these, which are so many confused and mis-shapen symbols of the Redeemer, let us turn to the proofs of an actual expectation of this Divine Person, pervading the Gentile world at the time of his appearance. The testimony of two Roman historians, both of them heathens, is express; and though often referred to, the passages are too important not to be quoted at present. One of them has these words: 'Many persons were persuaded that in the ancient

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gives a print of the Serpent biting Creeshna's heel, which, together with that of Creeshna trampling on the Serpent, is 'to be found,' he says, 'in Sounerat, who adds that no Veeshnuvite of distinction is without these images in his house, in gold, silver, or copper; of such high moment has this subject been immemorially deemed in India!' Preface to the 3d pt. p. vii. Mr. Moor, however, author of 'the Hindoo Pantheon,' says, p. 199, v. 2. 'Among my images and pictures of this deity (and they are very numerous, for he is enthusiastically and extensively adored, and his history affords great scope for the imagination,) I have not one original, nor did I ever see one, in which the snake is biting Krishna's foot; and I have been hence led to suspect that the plates engraved in Europe, of that action, are not solely of Hindoo invention or origin. I may easily err in this instance, but I am farther strengthened in the suspicion, from never having heard the fact alluded to in the many conversations that I have held with Brahmans and others on the subject of this Avatara.'

books of the priests was contained a prophecy, that at that very time it would come to pass that *the East should prevail, and some coming out of Judea should possess the empire.*' (*a*) The other tells us 'an old and constant opinion had prevailed in the East, that the Fates had decreed that at that time *some coming out of Judea should possess the empire.*' (*b*) The same author mentions in another place a prophetic saying, 'that nature was bringing forth a king over the Roman people.' (*c*) As each of these writers, in mentioning the prophecy, has employed the same words, it is not, perhaps, unreasonable to suppose that the very expression was to be found in some prophetic book, to which great authority was attached. That such books existed, and were held in high veneration, will scarcely be doubted by any one; and it seems clear that the Sibylline oracles contained a passage prophetic of an universal king. (*d*)

(*a*) Tacitus Hist. lib. v. c. 13.

(*b*) Suetonius in Vesp. c. 4.

(*c*) In Oct. c. 94.

(*d*) See Bp. Chandler's Defence of Christianity, c. 1. s. 1. and Bp. Horsley's Dissertation on the Prophecies of the Messiah dispersed among the Heathen. Fabricius, in his

From hence, perhaps, the Romans might derive the notion above-mentioned; and hence Virgil seems to have drawn those sublime ideas which he has introduced into his fourth eclogue. But it is to be observed,

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Enquiry into the Genuineness of the Sibylline Oracles, (Bibl. Græc. lib. 1. c. xxx.) argues that Virgil never referred to them in his fourth Eclogue, but to Hesiod; and in this opinion he is followed by Job Eckhard, in his Tract, 'Non Christianorum de Christa Testimonia.' Jortin, however, who has quoted in his Remarks on Eccl. Hist. the seventeen Propositions, in which Fabricius has delivered his judgment, determines that the poet in the expression 'Cumæi Carminis,' meant to refer to a Sibylline Oracle; but, he adds, 'I say not that he took any thing thence, besides a renovation and a golden age.' Jortin was careful not to err on the side of credulity. But, whoever will follow the writers quoted above, particularly the former of them, in a diligent comparison of several parts of Virgil's Eclogue with passages of the Old Testament, will find it difficult to resist the conclusion, that more than the promise of a golden age was to be found in the 'Cumæum Carmen,' and that some of the inspired prophetical writings had a place among the Sibylline books, which, it must be observed, had been collected from various countries seventy or eighty years before Christ. And if he should believe Bp. Horsley's assertion, that Justin Martyr, at least, lived before the age of pious frauds, he may, perhaps, be of opinion that many writings existed among the Heathen, predictive of Christ and his Gospel. But the *fulness and distinctness* of prophecy *respecting the Messiah and all things to be done by him*, which this father attributes to the Sibyl, tends to shake the credit of his testimony.

that the historian states it to be also an old and constant opinion prevailing in the East, where it must have arisen from another source, perhaps from various sources.

A full and remarkable proof of the existence of this expectation in the East is afforded by the journey of the Magi to Jerusalem recorded by St. Matthew. The story is told in the short and simple manner of the Evangelist, scarcely supposing any thing extraordinary, much less accounting for it. The circumstances, however, deserve your attention.

" When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." (*a*) These, which are here denominated " wise men" were literally Magi, belonging to a sect of philosophers, chiefly resident in Persia, who renounced idolatry, and worshipped one God. They were not merely wise, as being versed in

(*a*) Matt. ii. 1.

the principles of science and natural philosophy; but were devoted to religious study, and were therefore peculiarly qualified to receive tidings of the birth of the Son of God. He then, who announced this great event to the Jewish shepherds, and sent them to Bethlehem, conducted the Magi also thither as the first fruits of the Gentiles.

"We have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." How knew they it to be HIS star? We are not told that the Almighty vouchsafed them any immediate communications, though it seems nowise improbable that some notice was given them by a dream of the night, similar to that which afterwards directed their return from Bethlehem. Yet even if we suppose a divine interposition, for which we have no warrant, still their minds must have been prepared, some previous expectation must have been raised, or they would scarcely have been qualified to receive a communication from God. Such expectation, as we have already learned from the Roman historians, really existed in the East, and probably impressed itself with greater

force on the minds of the Magi than on others less learned and less religious. And perhaps we have no cause to be surprised at this, when we recollect the ancient prophecies to Abraham, to his son, and grandson, speaking of the Messiah as a blessing promised to all nations; the declaration of his faith made by Job in the land of Idumea; and the sublime prophecies of Balaam who dwelt on the banks of the Euphrates; when we remember that nearly the whole of the Old Testament was written before the Babylonish captivity; that the Jews would carry with them to Babylon, not only their Scriptures, but their expectation of a Messiah; and the ten tribes which were widely scattered, though they did not receive the prophetical books, would disseminate in their dispersions that hope which was always strong in an Israelitish breast. The predictions in the book of Genesis, which promise a blessing to all nations in the seed of Abraham, are many and distinct. (*a*) Some of these, you will

(*a*) Gen. xii. 3.; xviii. 18.; xxii. 18.; xxvi. 4.; xxviii. 14.; xlix. 10. to which Bp. Horsley would add xxviii. 3.; xxxv. 11.; xlviii. 4.

remember, were delivered before the children of Israel became a distinct nation; before Ishmael and the sons of Keturah were separated from the family of Abraham, or Esau from the house of his father Isaac. All these, therefore, together with the rest whom "Abraham sent into the east country(*a*)," might carry with them the remembrance of that promise which appears to have excited ambition in the early ages; a promise, which, if we may form our judgment from the correct notions entertained in our Saviour's time by the Samaritans(*b*), was interpreted in a spiritual sense, by those who received it only from the books of Moses. How long any of the nations which descended from the father of the faithful, retained a knowledge of the true God, we cannot say. Thus much, however, we have good grounds for believing, that this knowledge was not lost among some of the nations of Arabia, in the days of Job; that the priestly office was continued in that illustrious patriarch; and the spirit of prophecy in the wicked, but highly favoured,

(*a*) Gen. xxv. 6. (*b*) John, iv. 25, 42.

Balaam. And I know no reason against the supposition that the Almighty might see fit to preserve among the Gentiles, by means natural or supernatural, means most agreeable to him, and therefore best suited to the end proposed, some knowledge of himself, and some expectation of the promised Redeemer.

This expectation, sent down from the early ages, was perhaps kept alive in the country which the Magi inhabited more particularly by the remembrance of Balaam's prophecy. The burthens laid upon Moab and Edom, Egypt and Assyria, by Isaiah and Ezekiel, interspersed with predictions of One who should "establish the throne in mercy, and sit upon it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness,"(*a*) these, I say, disseminated by the Jews, and referred by them to the days of the Messiah, could scarcely fail to excite an anxious interest in the minds of those who were led by their profession to calculate times and seasons. And more than all, the language of Daniel, whose name was possibly holden

(*a*) Isa. xvi. 5.

in high veneration by the Disciples of Zoroaster,(*a*) would direct their eyes to Him who was to possess an everlasting dominion.

From the ancient predictions, then, of divinely inspired persons, (which it has been supposed, were collected and preserved by the Gentile priests(*b*),) together with those of the Jewish prophets, the Magi would learn and carefully transmit in their schools an expectation of a future sovereign. This expectation was strengthened by intercourse with the Jews, perhaps by secret influence of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts. And thus instructed they looked forward with confident assurance to the Star which should come out of Jacob, and the Sceptre which should rise out of Israel. The ages meanwhile roll their appointed course;—the season of the fulfilment of promise draws nigh;—the heathen oracles are silent;—an universal peace prevails, giving leisure for calm thought and contemplation ; — the eyes of men are turned to

(*a*) See the account of Zoroaster in Prideaux's Connection, taken from the oriental writers.

(*b*) See Bp. Horsley's Dissertation.

Judea, which is pointed out as the birth-place of the sovereign of the world; — and lo! a star of extraordinary appearance announces to those who were in the habit of contemplating the heavenly phenomena, the birth of the Messiah; and, like a faithful messenger, guides their willing steps to the court of Herod and the manger at Bethlehem; there, to prostrate themselves before Him who was born king of the Jews, and present gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Such were the first-fruits of the Gentile world, offered to the infant Jesus, the pledge and promise of a glorious harvest: such the proof of an expectation prevailing, not only among the poor, the illiterate, and the credulous; but among the rich, and the wise, who could investigate causes, and distinguish the truth. Oh, that such were never blinded by a false philosophy! Oh, that none who possess the pomp of wealth, or the pride of learning, now that the day-star has risen upon their hearts, and the full blaze of revelation shines around them, were ashamed to bend before the manger at Bethlehem, in humble adoration of the incarnate God!

Thus hath the Almighty never left the world without some knowledge of the truth, some expectation of a Redeemer. Some rays of divine light illuminated even the thickest darkness; some remains of a former promise lived in the minds of the heathens; some divine impressions shewed them their wants and their inability to supply them; some gracious communications instructed them whither to look for deliverance from ignorance and superstition. These faint gleams were lost in that glorious light which burst upon the earth when the Sun of righteousness rose to bring wisdom and sanctification and redemption. But they served to guide many a wandering traveller through the thick night which enveloped the Gentile world, to preserve the doctrine of a Divine Providence, to direct the thoughts and researches of the philosopher, and to cherish in the minds of thousands the hope of a deliverance, though they but imperfectly comprehended either the evils which they endured, or the nature of the promised redemption.

How gloriously did our blessed Lord re-

lieve all doubts, and satisfy all expectations, and prove himself the delight and joy, as he had been the desire, of all nations! How did he bring peace to the afflicted soul, comfort to the weary and heavy laden! How did he teach the ignorant the knowledge of God and of a future state, and shew the sinner the error and evil of his ways! How did he point out a refuge from the wrath of God, and give the knowledge of salvation for the remission of sins! Such are the glories of redemption! Such the blessings of the Gospel!

But the great things which have been revealed, kindle in our hearts a hope of future mercies. In this our earthly state there must ever be an imperfection which cannot satisfy a creature born for immortality. The soul looks out beyond the horizon which appears to bound its view, and indulges in the contemplation of future and glorious prospects. Before the revelation made by the Gospel, the "whole creation, subject to vanity, groaned and travailed in pain;" feeling the evils of ignorance and superstition, and desiring to

be released from them; desiring to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (*a*) And even now that the Redeemer is come, and has revealed to the meanest of his servants those things which prophets and kings have in vain desired to see and hear, these good tidings serve but to kindle an ardent desire of greater blessings. The more we contemplate with admiration and love the character of our Lord and the salvation which he hath wrought, the more earnestly do we look forward to the full manifestation of his glory at his second coming. Still, therefore, is He "the Desire of all nations:" even they "which have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves (*b*)," looking for and hasting unto (*c*) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (*d*) when the heavens and the earth shall not only be shaken, but shall pass away with a great noise, and melt with

(*a*) Rom. viii. 21, 22. (*b*) Rom. viii. 23.
(*c*) 2 Pet. iii. 12. (*d*) Mal. iii. 2.

fervent heat? Labour diligently, my Christian brethren, "that you may be found of him without spot and blameless:" fix in your hearts a deep and grateful sense of the blessings which he has vouchsafed you, and cherish a lively hope of those which are yet in store for his faithful servants: study his law, that you may learn his will: imitate his character, which is the pattern of your conduct: let the same mind be in you which was in him, the same holiness and self-denial, the same love of God, and of all mankind; the same blessed spirit of peace and heavenly joy. Then "look up, and lift up your heads as the day of your redemption draweth nigh," in full assurance that to you, and to all who love his appearing, he will make good his great and precious promises in that kingdom of glory, where is "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

SERMON VI.

The Fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets.

Matthew, v. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The expression in this text, "the Law and the Prophets," includes the whole of the Old Testament. By "the Law" a Jew understood the five books of Moses (*a*):

(*a*) See Poole's Synopsis. This was probably the division made in common speech. The more regular distribution of the books of Scripture was into three classes: 1. The Law, containing the five books of Moses: 2. The Prophets, containing the greater and lesser Prophets, and the historical books, as far as the second book of Kings: 3. The Hagiographa, which comprised all the rest. The Jewish writers are not exactly agreed as to the contents of the second and third of these classes.

by "the Prophets," all the other inspired books of the Scriptures. — What, now, did our Lord mean by destroying the Law and the Prophets? and what, by fulfilling them? To destroy is to abrogate, to annul, to subvert, and put an end to. The Law was destroyed, when its ceremonies were abolished, and its precepts annulled. The Prophets were destroyed, when their predictions were not verified, and their authority was disregarded. — To fulfil is the opposite of to destroy: it is to confirm and ratify: to accomplish and fully perform. When the types and figures under the Law were completed, and its moral precepts were explained and established; the Law was fufilled: when that which the Prophets had foretold was accomplished, and that which they had taught was renewed and confirmed, the Prophets might be said to be fulfilled. — Christ therefore did not destroy the Law or the Prophets, but fulfilled them; when, instead of putting an end to the authority of either the one or the other, he 'fulfilled the types and prophecies by his actions and sufferings, performed perfect obedience to the Law of God in his

own person; and fully enforced and explained it by his doctrine.' (*a*)

From the object and the whole tenor of Christ's discourse in his sermon on the Mount, it seems clear that in the words of the text he did not allude to the ceremonial, but to the moral part of the Law; and that he spoke of the Prophets (*b*), not with any regard to their predictions of future events, but as the interpreters of God's will, and instructors of the people. Yet as many persons understand our Saviour to speak of the figures of the Law, and the predictions of the Prophets; and as it is certain that he very remarkably fulfilled both the one and the other, I shall consider the text in this view, as well as the former; and shall point out, in the present and a following discourse, some of the types and prophecies which were accomplished in Christ.

And first for the figures under the Law.—"The Law," we are told by St. Paul, "had a shadow of good things to come." (*c*) That

(*a*) Parkhurst under πληρόω. (*b*) See Mede's Works, p. 12.
(*c*) Heb. x. 1.

is, it represented (sometimes perhaps faintly and obscurely) the blessings provided for us under the Gospel. The atonement made by the sacrifice of beasts prefigured the real atonement made for sin by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." The secure possession of the land of Canaan promised to the Israelites was a shadow of the everlasting inheritance which is prepared for the faithful. — This key of the Apostle having opened to us the true meaning of the Law, we shall not be surprised to find that all the leading circumstances and important parts of it were "patterns" (*a*) of spiritual things.

But at present my object is to set before you those types and figures which were accomplished in Christ; — the shadows, of which He is the substance.

1. Now, here, the first thing which comes before us is the institution of sacrifice; a religious ceremony, which was practised immediately after the fall of Adam, and was enjoined by the Almighty to be

(*a*) Heb. ix. 23.

regularly performed by his chosen people. It cannot fail to strike you, that this was appointed on account of sin; for it dates its origin from the time when man became a sinner; and it was particularly commanded by the law of Moses, of which one leading principle appears to be, that some atonement or satisfaction was to be made for every act of uncleanness and of sin. Sacrifices were of two kinds: bloody and unbloody. I speak at present only of those of the former kind. They were performed by bringing a bullock or a ram to the altar, where the priest, having put his hands on the head of the animal, killed it, poured forth the blood before the Lord, and burnt part of it upon the altar. Once in every year, on the great day of expiation, the high priest carried the blood into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, in order to make atonement for the sins of all the people.

The slaying of beasts in sacrifice represented, as you know, the death of the Son of God as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This subject is treated at large by

St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. The great principle which he there lays down is, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission (*a*)" — no pardon of sin. Therefore he shows that "almost all things were by the Law purged with blood;" that "the book of the law, the tabernacle, and vessels of the ministry, were sprinkled with blood;" that they might be cleansed from all pollution. But beyond all these, it was the leading principle of the Law, as declared by God himself, that "it is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul." (*b*) Therefore the people were commanded to bring their sacrifices to be offered by the priests; and for the same reason they were enjoined to abstain from eating blood. (*c*) — But now, "it is not possible," as the apostle argues, "that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The bloody sacrifices therefore under the Law must have been intended to represent that which alone could make atonement for the sins of the world; — the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once

(*a*) Heb. ix. 22. (*b*) Lev. xvii. 11. (*c*) Lev. v. 12.

for all. This was the great sacrifice, which was fore-ordained by the Father before the foundation of the world. And the offering of beasts was plainly designed to carry the eyes of the faithful forwards to this great event; and keep in their view the precious blood-shedding of the Son of God. — Here then is one instance in which Jesus Christ fulfilled the law. His death was the fulfilment and accomplishment of the law of sacrifice. "The blood of bulls and of goats sanctified, to the purifying of the flesh; but the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purges the conscience from dead works." (*a*)

2. As the Law had its sacrifices, so it had priests to offer them. These likewise were figures of Jesus Christ. "Every priest stood daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices;" — sacrifices of beasts, "which could never take away sins." (*b*) In these ministrations and oblations he was a type and emblem of Him who "offered one

(*a*) Heb. ix. 14. (*b*) Heb. x. 11.

sacrifice for sins," the sacrifice of himself; and "by that one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Consider the rules observed by the high priest on the great day of expiation; and you will see a lively emblem of the offering made by Christ upon the cross. In the tabernacle and in the temple were two places particularly set apart for the service of God: the former, or outer, was called the holy place; the second, or inner, was called the most holy, or holy of holies. These were separated by a veil, or curtain, of very curious workmanship. Into the first, or holy place, the priests went continually, to minister before the Lord, and offer the daily sacrifice. "But into the second," or most holy place, "went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." (*a*) This was on the day of expiation, or atonement. On that day the high priest carried the blood of a bullock and of a goat which were slain for sin-offerings, the one for himself, and the other for the

(*a*) Heb. ix. 7.

people, within the veil: and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. This most holy place was, no doubt, intended to represent the highest heaven, the presence of God; and the high priest, standing before the mercy-seat with the blood, was a figure of Jesus Christ presenting himself before the throne of the Majesty on high. He is the great, the true high priest; "an high priest of good things to come, who, not with the blood of goats and of calves, but by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." By his blood poured forth upon the cross he made atonement for the sins of the whole world; and ascending up on high, he, as it were, carried his blood to the mercy-seat of the most high God; thereby to obtain an entrance into the highest heaven for his faithful followers. As a sign, that by his precious blood-shedding a way was opened into the holy places not made with hands, the veil in the temple was rent in twain at the moment of his death. The priesthood under the law was fulfilled in him; the great work of atonement was accomplished.

Here then is another instance in which Christ fulfilled the law, as the true high priest, of whom the priests under the Law were figures; — not like them "entering into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:" — not like them offering often, "as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others; but now once in the end of the world appearing, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (*a*)

3. Let us now proceed to some circumstances in the history of the Israelites, which were figurative of Jesus Christ. They were fed, you recollect, during their sojourning in the wilderness with manna from heaven. I mention this the rather, because we have the authority of Christ himself for considering it typical and representative of him. When the Jews demanded a sign from him, and referred him to the miracle which Moses had wrought in feed-

(*a*) Heb. ix. 24, 25, 26. (*b*) John, vi. 32, 33.

ing their fathers with manna, Jesus answered, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven: for the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (*b*) And again, " I am the bread of life: your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead: this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." (*a*) Here you see, Christ, as the living and true bread, is opposed to the manna which fed the Israelites in the desert. That was only bodily food for them: Christ is the spiritual food of his people. That only nourished and supported them for a few years in this world: Christ is the food and sustenance of the faithful; to strengthen them unto life everlasting.

What, now, are we to understand by these expressions, that " Christ is the bread of life," and that " he that eateth

(*a*) John, vi. 32, 33. (*b*) John, v. 48 & seq.

him shall live by him?" We may understand them either of his doctrine, or of the sacrament of his body and blood. When we receive Christ into our hearts by faith; when we look to him as our only Saviour, and to his death as the price of our redemption, and the means of obtaining all spiritual blessings for us; when we are closely united to him in belief and obedience; and have a habitual regard to him as the support of our spiritual life; — then we may be said, in the figurative language of Scripture, to feed upon him, and derive life and nourishment to our souls from faith in him. And this he may appear to have intended, when he said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." But we may also understand our Lord to have contemplated that holy ordinance, in which we spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood. There we celebrate his death under the symbols which he appointed. There we are more truly said to feed upon him, and receive him into our souls, when we receive "the cup of blessing which is the communion of the blood of Christ,

and the broken bread which is the communion of the body of Christ." (*a*)

Jesus Christ then was prefigured and pointed out by the manna in the wilderness. The Jews were so little acquainted with the meaning of their law, and the spiritual intent of the circumstances of their history, that they wondered at the language of Christ, and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" But if our eyes are opened, as they ought to be, we shall see that the Law contained shadows, of which the substance is in the Gospel;—figures, which were fulfilled in Christ. We shall perceive that every thing under the Law was intended to prepare the way for a better system, and a more spiritual dispensation. And particularly we shall observe that Jesus Christ, and the blessings of the Gospel, as they were promised to the patriarchs, and foretold by the prophets, so they were pointed out by the various circumstances, which befel the people of Israel, and the various ceremonies which were appointed for their observance.

(*a*) 1 Cor. x. 16.

4. As our Saviour has taught us to consider the manna, the bread from heaven, as a type of him; so we learn from St. Paul that he was prefigured also by the rock from which the waters flowed in the wilderness. Speaking of the manna, he calls it "spiritual meat;" that is, typical or figurative meat; and the rock he calls likewise a spiritual or typical rock. From this expression we learn that the meat and drink with which the Israelites were supplied, ought not to be looked upon as merely common or natural food, designed only to support their bodies or quench their thirst; but that there was something spiritual concealed under these outward signs. The manna, as we have seen, was an emblem of Christ. And so says the apostle of the rock: "that rock was Christ (*a*):" that is, it was a type, or figure of Christ. How was it a type of Christ? Plainly, as from thence came forth waters for the comforting and refreshing of the Israelites, which represented the spiritual graces that flow abundantly from the blessed Jesus.

(*a*) 1 Cor. x. 4.

" If any man thirst," said he to the Jews, " let him come unto me and drink." (*a*) This, we are told, " he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." Under the same figure he spoke to the woman of Samaria; " Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life."(*b*) The same language is again put into the mouth of Jesus in the book of Revelation; " Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (*c*) This then is the image, under which the graces of the Spirit are continually represented in Scripture. And the rock at Horeb, pouring forth its waters at the command of God in a stream so copious as to afford drink to six hundred thousand men with their women, and children, and cattle, is a lively emblem of that Saviour who shed forth so abundantly the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and first disciples. — The rock of which the Israelites drank is said to have " followed

(*a*) John, vii. 37. (*b*) John, iv. 14. (*c*) Rev. xxii. 17.

them;" which is generally understood to mean, that the stream which flowed from the rock accompanied them during their wanderings in the wilderness, and afforded a constant supply of water in that "barren and dry land." And thus Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of living waters, who is "wont to give more than either we desire or deserve, pours down upon us the abundance of his mercy." As he gave the Holy Ghost upon the apostles in extraordinary measure, he now assists his people continually with the ordinary supplies of grace: his "loving-kindness and mercy follow them all the days of their life;" comforting them in trouble, refreshing them when they are weary, nourishing them with all goodness, putting gladness into their hearts and strength into their souls.

5. One circumstance more shall be mentioned, which occurred during the journeyings of the Israelites, — the lifting up of the brazen serpent. The history of it is told in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers. On occasion of some murmurings of the people, the Lord sent fiery

serpents among them, which bit them; and much people of Israel died. And when the people confessed their sin, and Moses prayed for them, "the Lord said unto him, Make thee a brazen serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." — Here you may observe how the Almighty makes use of common and natural means, to teach spiritual truths. To punish the murmuring of the people, he sent fiery serpents among them; animals of a most venomous and deadly nature. This might surely remind the Israelites of that old serpent, the Devil, who brought ruin upon our race at the beginning. When they prayed for pardon, he commanded a serpent of brass to be lifted up on a pole, that they might look upon it, and live. This was certainly intended to point out the Saviour of the world lifted up upon the cross; and that sinners must look to him for life and salva-

tion. — That the Jews understood it in a figurative sense, we may learn from the Book of Wisdom, where the brazen serpent is spoken of as " a sign of salvation, for he that turned himself toward it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by Thee, that art the Saviour of all." (*a*) — If we could at all doubt of the spiritual meaning of this which God commanded, we might learn it from the mouth of our blessed Lord himself: " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (*b*) — In the brazen serpent, then, you see another shadow, of which Christ is the substance; another figure which was fulfilled in him. And in this, as well as in the former instances, he may be truly said to have fulfilled the Law, by accomplishing what was there foretold under types and emblems.

From what has been said on this part of the subject, I would exhort you to a lively

(*a*) Wisd. xvi. 6, 7. (*b*) John, iii. 14, 15.

faith in Jesus Christ. It is most striking to contemplate how every age and every dispensation have borne testimony to this great Person. Not now to go back to the sacrifice of Abel, the priesthood of Melchisedec, the offering of Isaac, or the sufferings and exaltation of Joseph, — all of whom were types and figures of Jesus, — the ceremonies under the law of Moses, which were principally intended to keep the people of God distinct from other nations, were yet calculated to prefigure and point out Him who is "the end of the Law," and the accomplishment of all that was wanting in it: And the miracles which the Almighty was pleased to work for the Israelites in the wilderness were so ordered, as to foreshow the greater blessings bestowed by Christ upon his Church.

The Law was intended to prepare the way for the Gospel; and the Israelites, in their wanderings, were patterns and examples to us Christians; — they journeying through the wilderness to the promised land of Canaan; we, as pilgrims and sojourners in this world, on our way to our everlasting rest

in heaven: they receiving their daily food by a constant miracle from the hand of God; we deriving continual spiritual blessings from the same gracious Being: each constantly dependent upon our heavenly Father; but in them we chiefly regard their earthly condition; in ourselves we consider our spiritual state.

How much then should we admire the greatness of that Person, who has been described or revealed in so many various ways, as the Saviour of mankind, and the Giver of all goodness! of Him, who was the soul and life-giving principle of every system; without whom the Law was but a heap of uninteresting ceremonies, and sacrifice an unmeaning ordinance! How should it increase our belief and trust in Him, when we reflect that He is the object on whom the eyes of all those who obtained a good report through faith have been fixed in every age; — that Abraham the father of the faithful "rejoiced to see his day;" and Moses the servant of God spake of him, and foretold that God would raise up a Prophet like unto himself! How

deeply should we reflect on the importance of his atonement, and the excellence of the graces which we derive from him, when we see them shadowed out and described by the finger of God in the law which he gave to his chosen people! How thankful should we feel for the superior advantages which we enjoy; "when we behold with an open face the glory of the Lord;" when the shadows are dispersed, the types and figures are fulfilled, and the Gospel is clearly made known to us; when that which was carnal is become spiritual; instead of the bondage of servants we enjoy the liberty of sons; instead of the (*a*) killing letter of the law, which is the ministration of condemnation, we partake of that life-giving spirit, which affords pardon and righteousness, grace and glory!

Let it, then, be your earnest endeavour, brethren, to improve under the spiritual blessings which your heavenly Father has in mercy vouchsafed to you. Look unto Christ, as the object of pious belief in

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

every age — obscurely shadowed out to the Jew, but clearly revealed to the Christian. Let the Law be your school-master and instructor, to bring you to Christ. (*a*) When you read of the sacrifices which it enjoined, as emblems of the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Son of God, be it your care to study and adore the merciful goodness of that Saviour who gave himself for your sins, and to partake of that "unbloody sacrifice" of bread and wine at his altar, by which you "show the Lord's death till he come." (*b*) When you recollect the miraculous food with which the Israelites were supplied, and the rock which gave them drink, think of Him who is the true support of his people; "whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed (*c*);" feed upon him by faith, and receive his graces into your hearts; eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of Man, that you may have life in you. When you hear of the brazen serpent which was lifted up in the wilderness, turn your eyes to the cross, and to him who

(*a*) Gal. iii. 24. (*b*) 1 Cor. xi. 26.
(*c*) John, vi. 53. 55.

hung upon it; look unto him who was lifted up for your sake, and by devout faith and steadfast contemplation derive from him pardon of your sins and health to your souls. And in whatever character you view him, and under whatever figure he is represented to you, remember that he is not only an object to be admired, but a pattern for you to copy; and that if he is really placed before your eyes, or received into your hearts, you will be conformed to his image in righteousness and true holiness.

SERMON VII.

The Fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets.

Matt. v. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

When so great a person as the Son of God was to appear among men, it is reasonable to suppose that the world would be prepared for his coming. If he had been only a prophet, or "teacher sent from God," it might have been sufficient that he should prove his divine mission, like other prophets, "by miracles, and wonders, and signs." But when God was to be manifest in the flesh, — when He was

to be born who was to bruise the serpent's head, and destroy the power of the evil one, — who was to make atonement for the sins of the whole world, and restore mankind to the favour of their Maker, — who was to conquer sin and death, and bring life and immortality to light, — we cannot imagine that such a person would be revealed for the first time when he was born into the world: but that he would be mentioned long before; and that those who lived in former times would be taught to expect Him, in whose coming they, as well as the rest of the world, were so deeply interested. — This we find to have really happened. Jesus Christ was promised from the beginning. And that promise was repeated so distinctly and continually, that an expectation was kept up through all succeeding ages. He was foreshown by the figures under the Law: he was foretold by the songs of the Prophets. So that when the fulness of the time was come, and the Saviour appeared, it was not without due preparation: the ages which went before bore testimony to him; the Law and the Prophets attended, as it were, in his

train, to do him homage, and confirm the faith of his followers; the word of God pointed him out to the Jews as their Redeemer; and an extraordinary tradition pervading the rest of the world directed the eyes of the Gentiles to him who was to rise out of the East and govern the world. Thus did the Providence of God ordain that the dignity of his Son should be duly consulted, and a firm foundation be at the same time laid for the faith of those who should be called upon to believe in him.

In a former discourse I shewed you how Jesus fulfilled the Law by fulfilling the types and figures of it. I shall now proceed to point out how the Prophecies were fulfilled in him. And here I propose to lay before you the general plan which the Spirit of God thought fit to pursue, making some remarks as we proceed. In speaking of the Prophets as distinguished from the Law, we should naturally leave out of our consideration the five books of Moses, but if we were to omit them at present, we should omit by far the greater part of the history

of the world. I shall therefore carry you up to the earliest times, to shew you that the Spirit of prophecy bore testimony to Jesus from the very beginning.

In the sentence pronounced by the Almighty upon the serpent in Paradise was the well-known promise of the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. This has been always understood to point to the Saviour Jesus Christ; peculiarly the seed of the woman, because he was to be born of a virgin. And thus, no sooner was man fallen into a state of sin and misery, than God, who remembereth us when we are in trouble, held out a prospect of recovery and salvation by the promise of a Redeemer.

As we find that sacrifices were instituted at that time or shortly after, and as Abel offered a better sacrifice than his brother Cain "through faith (*a*)," (the superior excellence of his sacrifice consisting probably in its being an offering of blood) it seems likely that God, who graciously continued to converse with man even after he

(*a*) Heb. xi. 4.

had been driven from Paradise, revealed so much at least of the redemption to be wrought by Christ, as that the patriarchs might understand that the animal whose blood was offered on the altar was a figure of the more precious blood-shedding which was to take away the sins of the world. I am not now, however, to speak of types or figures, but of prophecies. This only I would observe, that if the meaning of sacrifice was explained to Adam, so that he and his sons were enabled to offer by faith, *this explanation* was to him *a distinct prophecy* of the Saviour of the world.

When God saw fit to punish the wickedness of man by a flood, Noah and his family were preserved. His three sons became the heads of all the families of the earth; and it soon appeared that the promised Messiah was to spring from a younger one, Shem. This we seem to learn from a short prophecy delivered by Noah, which describes the fortunes of his three sons; or rather, of their descendants. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem: God shall enlarge Japhet: and he shall dwell in

the tents of Shem (*a*):" by which words, if taken in a spiritual sense, we may understand that the family of Shem was to be blessed by the Messiah being born in it; and that the posterity of Japhet should partake of the blessing.

Let us now proceed to the revelations made to the patriarch Abraham. In his time the Almighty was pleased to select one family to preserve the true faith in the midst of an idolatrous world. As Abraham was the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, we may expect the communications of the Almighty with him to have been frequent, and the promises made to him full and explicit. We shall not be mistaken in our expectation. When God tried the faith and obedience of this patriarch by commanding him to leave his kindred and his father's house, he accompanied the command with a promise to "make of him a great nation, and to bless him; and that in him should all families of the earth be blessed (*b*)," that is, 'that he should be the chosen ancestor of the promised Redeemer, and thereby the means

(*a*) Gen. ix. 26, 27. (*b*) Gen. xii. 2.

of blessing all the families of the earth.' (*a*) And when Abraham had endured the severer trial of offering his son, the Lord declared from heaven, and confirmed it with an oath, "In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." (*b*) "*Thy seed, which is Christ* (*c*)," saith St. Paul. Here then we have an undoubted instance of Christ being foretold to the Patriarchs. At that interesting moment perhaps Abraham saw the day of Christ, which our Saviour tells the Jews he was earnestly desirous to see, and was glad when he saw it. At that moment, — when he had with such entire confidence resigned himself to God, and had himself taken the knife to slay his son — his only son — whom he loved, — who was the heir of all God's promises: — at that moment it might please the Almighty to reveal to his faithful servant the great sacrifice of his own Son, which was to be made in after ages, on that spot where Isaac was laid upon the altar; that Lamb of God which the Father had provided; of whom

(*a*) Hales's Chronology. (*b*) Gen. xxii. 18.
(*c*) Gal. iii. 16.

Isaac, in his ready obedience, and gentle submission, was a willing and honoured emblem.

After the death of Abraham, the promise which the Lord had made to that patriarch was renewed to his son Isaac. "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." (*a*) The reason assigned is worthy of your notice: "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." The same promise was also made to Jacob (*b*), and nearly in the same terms.

And here let me request you to observe how the Almighty selects fit objects, by whom to effect his gracious purposes: how the will of man works freely to bring about what God has before ordained: and how he is pleased to make that a reward to his creatures, which he has himself, in his infinite counsels, determined shall come to pass. "Known unto him are all his works from the beginning." He sees all events, — nay, he pre-disposes them according to his will. Yet these events, thus foreseen,

(*a*) Gen. xxvi. 4, 5. (*b*) Gen. xxviii. 14.

and pre-disposed by him, are made to depend upon his creatures — beings who are free to promote, and free to oppose the will of their Maker. That Christ should be of the seed of Abraham was known and ordained by God from all eternity. Yet here we see that the honourable distinction enjoyed by that patriarch was the reward of his steadfast faith and willing obedience. Let us then be content to believe, however difficult it may be to our comprehension, that the foreknowledge of God and the free-will of man are perfectly consistent with each other; and adore with all humility that infinite wisdom which tries the faith and obedience of his servants, while he is effecting his own wise and benevolent counsels.

Consider also the manner in which this great Person, the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is described: — as He, *in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.* Thus you see he was spoken of as a Saviour from the beginning. This is his true character; the peculiar character in which he has been pleased to reveal himself. He was promised to our first parents, as One who should save or deliver mankind from

the power of the evil one. And here he is promised to the patriarchs for a blessing; and a blessing, not to their family or nation only; but to all the families and all the nations of the earth. "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribe of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth."(*a*) —Accordingly the news of his being born into the world was declared by the angel to be "tidings of great joy unto all people." — May we not from hence certainly infer that the faith of the patriarchs was the same with our's? That which is revealed to us was promised to them. That which they believed and hoped for we believe and rejoice in. How should it confirm our faith to find that the Lord our God is faithful and true in all his dispensations! How should it stimulate us to a right belief and a steadfast obedience, when we see these patriarchs fixed in their belief of those things which they could see only darkly, at

(*a*) Isa. xlix. 6.

a distance; and in that belief walking faithfully with God, and resigning themselves entirely to his disposal! "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." How will they rise up in the judgment to condemn us, if, after the mercy of God has been fully made known to us, we neglect so great salvation!

We have seen that the Saviour who was at the beginning revealed to the father of the whole human race, was afterwards promised more particularly to Shem and his descendants; that of all the families which sprang from him that of Abraham was particularly selected; that of the sons of Abraham Isaac was the one to whom the promise was renewed; and of his sons, Jacob was appointed to be the father of the promised seed. Jacob, to whom the Almighty gave the name of Israel, had twelve sons, who were the heads of the twelve tribes which composed the people of Israel. Of these tribes Judah was named by his father as the one from which the Messiah should spring. Calling all his sons around him just be-

fore his death, that he might declare by the Spirit of God the fortunes of each tribe, he delivered this remarkable prophecy respecting Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (*a*) In other words, Judah shall not cease to be a tribe under its governors and lawgivers, until the coming of Shiloh, *i. e.* the Peace-maker, or Saviour. Accordingly, we find that the tribe of Judah, being restored after the captivity of Babylon, remained as a distinct people until the days of Christ, when the door of the Church was thrown open to all nations, and all people were gathered together, and united under one head. The promise of the Messiah being thus confined to the tribe of Judah, no farther distinction was made till the days of David. Not that the voice of prophecy was altogether silent; for Moses foretold that "God would raise up a Prophet like unto him." (*b*) Up to this time likewise there appear to have

(*a*) Gen. xlix. 10. (*b*) Deut. xviii. 15.

been persons among the heathens, to whom the Almighty vouchsafed a portion of the prophetic spirit. Such, at least, was Balaam, who (however unworthy of the high office) was a prophet of the true God, and foretold the "Star which should come out of Jacob, and the Sceptre which should rise out of Israel." (*a*)

David, the man after God's own heart, who was himself a remarkable type and figure of Christ, seems to have been favoured with some extraordinary revelations concerning the Messiah; concerning his human and his divine nature; concerning his humble and his glorified state; concerning the cause for which he came into the world, the persecutions he underwent, his sufferings, his death, the very words he uttered on the cross, the barbarous treatment he received, the scoffs and taunts of his enemies, the bitter drink which was offered him; his resurrection, his ascension, his kingdom, and priesthood, the gifts which he poured forth on his Church, the universal diffusion of the Gospel. (*b*)

(*a*) Numb. xxiv. 17.

(*b*) See Psalm ii. xvi. xxii. xxiv. lxviii. lxix. cx.

Besides these, and many other particulars, it was plainly revealed to him that the Messiah should come of his family; and thus the space was again contracted, within which the Saviour was afterwards to be found.

The children of Israel being peculiarly God's people were under his especial government and protection; and even after they had in some degree cast him off, and obtained kings to rule them, like other nations, his Spirit was still with them; and there was probably no period, till about four hundred years before the coming of Christ, when they were without prophets inspired by God. During one melancholy part of their history, when, as Moses had foretold, "they forsook God which made them, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation (*a*);" when they were given up to idolatry under their idolatrous kings; (such, at least, were many of the kings of Judah, and all those of Israel,) I mean during a period of two hundred or two hundred and fifty years before the Babylonish captivity,

(*a*) Deut. xxxiii. 15.

the Spirit of prophecy seemed to be poured forth in greater measure; and those prophets appeared then, and for some years afterwards, whose divine songs are preserved in the Scripture, containing the most exquisite strains of poetry of every various kind that the mind of man has ever conceived, or his tongue pronounced. The immediate object of these inspired men was to "shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Judah their sins," and exhort them to turn to God. But a further object was constantly in their view; namely, to keep up among their countrymen a belief in the promised Redeemer: to point him out to them as their hope in trouble, their support in distress, the author of their present mercies and of everlasting salvation; their Lord and their King: and not their's only, but the joy of the whole earth. Hence in these prophecies many striking circumstances are mentioned, by which the Messiah might be distinguished at his coming. You have seen that he was to come of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. It was also foretold that he was to be born

of a virgin. (*a*) Bethlehem (*b*) was named as the place of his nativity. The time when he was to be expected was carefully computed. (*c*) The meekness and gentleness (*d*) of his character, and the miracles(*e*) which he wrought were also described. The extraordinary sufferings which he was to undergo (*g*),— the price(*h*) for which he was to be sold, — his remarkable entry (*i*) into Jerusalem, — the silent patience (*k*) with which he was to bear his affliction and torment, — his exaltation on account of his sufferings (*l*), — these and other circumstances were told by the Prophets in such a manner as distinctly to point out the only individual that ever appeared, in whom they all united; yet attended with so much obscurity as not to force conviction on any obstinate unbeliever. Nothing indeed is more remarkable, nor perhaps a greater proof of divine wisdom, than the manner in which God has afforded a sufficient proof that Jesus is the Christ, at the

(*a*) Is. vii. 14. (*b*) Micah, v. 2. (*c*) Dan. ix. 25.
(*d*) Is. xlii. 2, 3. (*e*) Is. xxxv. 3, 4. (*g*) Is. liii. 3. 5. 7.
(*h*) Zech. xi. 13. (*i*) Zech. ix. 9. (*k*) Is. liii. 7.
(*l*) Is. liii. 12.

same time that he has so wrapt up and veiled his proofs, as to give the honest mind an opportunity of exerting itself in a diligent search after the truth; and to leave those who are wilfully blind without light and without excuse.

Thus we have traced the course of prophecy respecting our Saviour from the beginning, till about four hundred years before his birth, when the spirit of prophecy ceased, and a solemn silence preceded that great period when God was to appear among men, and the gifts of the Spirit were to be poured forth almost without measure; a period, of which God had declared by the Prophet Joel, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. (*a*)

Let us now lay together some of the

(*a*) Joel, ii. 28, 29. Acts, ii. 17, 18.

principal circumstances which had been foretold; and see how they were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He was born of the nation of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Judah, — of the family of David, — born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, as he shewed by his miracles and his discourses; he preached the Gospel to the poor; he opened the eyes of the blind; he unstopped the ears of the deaf; he made the lame man to leap; and the tongue of the dumb to sing: — he did not strive nor cry; nor make his voice to be heard in the streets; he did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax: — he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: — he was betrayed to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver: — he gave his back to the smiters, he hid not his face from shame and spitting; he was wounded and bruised: brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and cut off out of the land of the living: — they pierced his hands and his feet; — they parted his garments among them and cast lots upon his vesture; — they gave him gall and vinegar; — they stood

staring and looking upon him; laughed him to scorn, and shook their heads, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him if he will have him: — He cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? — and then poured out his soul unto death: — Yet though he was numbered with the transgressors, and made his grave with the wicked, he was with the rich man in his death; — though he was cut off out of the land of the living, yet his flesh saw no corruption: — as he descended into the lower parts of the earth, so he ascended up on high and gave gifts unto men; — he sat down on the right hand of God till he should make his enemies his footstool. — Here are all the principal circumstances of his life and death, and the peculiar traits of his character, described many hundreds of years before he appeared, and with such minuteness, that his history may be written in the words of the Prophets. Can we hesitate to acknowledge him, who so exactly fulfilled what had been foretold, to be indeed the Christ that should come into the world? Can we fail to admire, and adore

that wisdom, which saw through all ages, and spake by the mouth of the prophets? that power, which made all things work together according to his will; which turned the fierceness of man to his praise; which was "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Having seen that our blessed Lord exactly fulfilled the prophecies which went before, it is natural to enquire if there are any which yet remain to be accomplished. Such an enquiry would perhaps shew that the Scripture contains many prophecies not yet fully accomplished; and that these continually point out one Person, who is described in the loftiest terms, as possessed of infinite power and glory. The revelation of St. John is a history of the Church, from the days of the Apostle to the end of all things. Now here the most conspicuous Person is He who is described throughout as the Lamb that had been slain, but who is at the same time said to be "Lord of lords, and King of kings." He it is who directed St. John to write to the seven Churches, and send

to each a message from him, as the Ruler and Judge of them all. He it is who opens the seals of the book which records the various fortunes of the Church. He it is, whom all the saints and angels declare to be "worthy to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing." He it is, who leads his chosen servants "who came out of great tribulation, to living fountains of waters." He it is, against whom the kings and the beast are said to make war, and by whom they are overcome. With Him the blessed and holy, who have part in the first resurrection, shall reign for a thousand years. He will be the bridegroom of the Church, the New Jerusalem; when "the first heaven and earth shall be passed away." He will reign at the right hand of the Father "till he hath put all enemies under his feet." He will "sit upon the throne of his glory," at the last day, to "judge the world in righteousness." — As he fulfilled those prophecies which described his character and condition when he was upon earth; so we doubt not that he will fulfil those also,

which speak of events that are now passing, or will hereafter come to pass.

From the hasty sketch that we have taken, in which it has been impossible to dwell upon particular passages, it appears that God has never left himself without a witness, nor the world without the knowledge of its Redeemer. Search the book of the word of God; you will find that Jesus Christ is the great end and object of prophecy, from the first to the last. Study it attentively — new lights will continually break forth, which shone as it were in a dark place, growing brighter and brighter, as the day of the manifestation of Christ drew near. Acquaint yourselves with the peculiar language of the prophets — you will find your Saviour in numberless passages where you might least expect it; shadowed out, perhaps, under some type or figure; or foretold in terms which literally describe the actions or sufferings of some other person who had the honour of being an emblem and representative of Him.

There are two opposite characters under

which the Messiah appears in the Psalms and Prophets: — as a patient sufferer, and a mighty conqueror. As a sufferer, he was, though innocent of all crime, to endure sorrow and affliction greater than any of the sons of men were ever called upon to undergo; and this, because the Lord laid on him the iniquities of all his brethren. As a conqueror, he was to be advanced to glory and honour, far beyond any which the world can offer; because the Lord had a delight in him on account of his willing obedience even unto death. The union of these two characters in one person forms the great and striking proof from prophecy that Jesus was the Christ. His low condition, his sufferings and death, were the stumbling-block of the Jews. They could not believe that one of whom so great things were spoken, should descend so low as to be "despised and rejected of men." Alas! that pride could so blind their eyes, that they should not be able to discover the ways of God, nor remember that it was "because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors," that the Father promised to

" divide him a portion with the great." Let us, my brethren, instead of being ashamed like them of the cross of Christ, most thankfully acknowledge the inestimable benefit of redemption by his blood; let us learn the high importance which God attached to the sufferings of Christ, since he spake of them long before by the mouth of his holy prophets; and let us learn that humility is the true path to honour, and that we must be content to " suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him."

But whether the Messiah is described as stooping to earth, or exalted to heaven, he is uniformly represented as the Friend and Saviour of his creatures. Every thing that he does or suffers is on their account. " For the transgression of his people he was stricken." " He is gone up on high, to lead captivity captive, and give gifts unto men." He was promised to Adam, as He that should bruise the head of his enemy; to the patriarchs as He who should be a blessing to all the families of the earth; to the Jews he was foretold, as their Shepherd

and Redeemer; to the Gentiles as their light and salvation. This is, if we may use the expression, his favourite character. Though "mercy and truth, (or justice) meet together" in him in perfect union, as he is the most high God; yet, as the Messiah, his office is to make satisfaction to a righteous God, and to shew mercy triumphing over justice. Though he is sometimes described with every circumstance of terror, great in strength, and fierce in wrath, trampling the people in his fury, and sprinkling his garments with their blood; yet it is for the sake of his redeemed, and against the enemies of his Church, that his wrath burns like fire. Nothing is more beautiful and affecting, even in the inspired volume itself, than the change by which the prophet, after describing the terrors of the Lord, returns to tell of his loving-kindnesses; of the great goodness which he hath bestowed upon his people according to his mercies; and of his love and his pity, wherewith he redeemed them.

Let me recommend this part of the subject to your attentive consideration. While you contemplate with admiration the great-

ness of that Person who is the object of prophecy in every age, stir up in your hearts the warmest feelings of love and gratitude for that mercy which is every where displayed, for that salvation which the servants of God have proclaimed in the loftiest strains. That which holy men of old believed, do not you, my brethren, doubt or neglect. That which they earnestly desired to see, let it be your greatest joy to possess, and hold it to your hearts as your richest treasure. And as you have witnessed the fulfilment of God's promises in Christ, which he made to former generations, look forward with full assurance of faith to the complete accomplishment of those which yet remain to be fulfilled in God's good time.

NOTE TO SERMON VII.

The Author has subjoined, at the suggestion of a learned friend, a list of texts containing the principal types and prophecies relating to the Messiah, with the parallel passages in the New Testament, which prove their accomplishment.

Old Testament.	*New Testament.*
Genesis. iii. 15.	Luke, iii. 23, 38; x. 18 — Mark, xvi. 17 — John, xii. 31 — Col. ii. 15.
xxii. 18.	Luke, iii. 23, 34 — Acts, iii. 25, 26 — Gal. iii. 16.
xlix. 10.	Luke, iii. 23, 33 — John, xii. 32.
Exodus, xii. 46.	John, xix. 36.
xvi. 15.	John, vi. 32, 50.
xvii. 6.	1 Cor. x. 4.
xxix. 38. } Num. xxviii. 3. } ...	John, i. 29. — 1 Peter, i. 19.
Levit. xvi. 14.	Heb. ix. 12.
Numb. xxi. 9.	John, iii. 14.
xxiv. 17.	Matt. ii. 2 — Rev. xxii. 16.
Deut. xviii. 15.	Acts, iii. 22, 23.
Psalm ii. 2.	Acts, iv. 26, 27.
7.	Acts, xiii. 33 — Rom. i. 4. — Heb. i. 5.
9.	Rev. xix. 15.
viii. 3—6.	Heb. ii. 6—9.

Old Testament.		*New Testament.*
Psalm viii. 6.	.....	Eph. i. 22.
xvi. 10.	.....	Acts, ii. 31 ; xiii. 34, 37.
xxii. 1.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 46.
7, 8.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 39, 43.
16.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 35 — John, xx. 25.
18.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 35 — John, xix. 24.
22.	.....	Heb. ii. 12.
xxxiv. 20.	.....	John, xix. 36.
xl. 6, 7, 8.	.....	Heb. x. 5, 6, 7, 8.
xli. 9.	.....	John, xiii. 18.
xlv. 6, 7.	.....	Heb. i. 8, 9.
lxviii. 18.	.....	Eph. iv. 8.
lxix. 9.	.....	John, iii. 17.
21.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 34 — John, xix. 29.
lxxxix. 4, 29. 36.	...	Luke, i. 33, 34.
cix. 3.	.....	John, xv. 25.
cx. 1.	.....	Matt. xxii. 34 — Acts, ii. 44.
4.	.....	Heb. v. 6.
cxviii. 22, 23.	.....	Mark, 12, 10 — Acts, iv. 11.
Isaiah, vii. 14.	.....	Matt. i. 23.
viii. 14.	.....	1 Peter, ii. 8.
ix. 6.	.....	Luke, ii. 11.
	.....	John, iii. 16.
	.....	Luke, xxiv. 19 — John, x. 30, 36, 38.
	.....	John, i. 14 ; iii. 11 — Col. ii. 3.
	.....	Rom. ix. 5.
	.....	Eph. i. 20, 21, 22 — Heb. ii. 5, 6.
	.....	Luke, ii. 14 — John, xvi. 33 — Eph. ii. 14.
7.	.....	Luke, i. 32, 33.
xxxv. 5, 6.	.....	Mark, i. 42 — Luke, iv. 40.
xl. 3, 4.	.....	Luke, iii. 4, 5.

Old Testament.		*New Testament.*
Isaiah, xl. 11.	.....	John, x. 14.
xlii. 1 — 4.	.....	Matt. xii. 18 — 21.
xlix. 6.	.....	Luke, ii. 32 — Acts, xiii. 47.
liii. 1.	.....	John, xii. 38.
2, 3.	.....	Mark, vi. 3 — John, xix. 15 — Mark, xiv. 33.
4.	.....	Matt. viii. 17.
5.	.....	1 Cor. xv. 3 — 1 Pet. ii. 24.
6.	.....	Rom. iii. 23, 24, 25. — 1 Peter, ii. 24, 25.
7.	.....	Mark, xiv. 61; xv. 3 — Acts, viii. 32 — 35.
8.	.....	Luke, xxiii. 23 — Heb. ix. 28 — 1 Pet. iii. 18.
9.	.....	Matt. xxvii. 38, 57, 58, 60.
10.	.....	2 Cor. v. 21 — Rev. v. 11; vii, 9.
11.	.....	Rom. v. 9. 17, 18.
12.	.....	Phil. ii. 9 — Col. ii. 15.
lix. 20, 21.	.....	Rom. xi. 26, 27.
lx. 6.	.....	Matt. ii. 11.
lxi. 1, 2.	.....	Luke, iv. 18, 19.
lxv. 1, 2.	.....	Rom. x. 20, 21.
Jer. xxxi. 22.	.....	Matt. i. 25.
Daniel, ix. 24.	.....	Matt. xxiii. 32.
	.....	2 Cor. v. 18, 19 — Heb. ii. 17.
	.....	Mark, xvi. 15 — Rom. v. 21.
	.....	Matt. xi. 33. — Acts, x. 43.
	.....	Luke, i. 35 — Acts, x. 38.
26.	.....	Rom. v. 6, 8. — 1 Cor. v. 7.
Jonah, i. 17.	.....	Matt. xii. 40.
Micah, v. 2.	.....	Matt. ii. 6.
Haggai, ii. 7.	.....	John, ii. 17.
Zechar. ix. 9.	.....	Matt. xxi. 5 — John, xii. 15.
Malachi, iii. 1.	.....	Matt. xi. 10.

SERMON VIII.

The Fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets.

Matt. v. 17.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The object of our blessed Master in this chapter, which contains the first part of his Sermon on the Mount, evidently was to inculcate the moral duties of the Gospel, as opposed to the false interpretations of the Law which were then adopted, and to the corrupt practices which then prevailed. He begins his discourse with teaching a few of the cardinal virtues of his religion. And this he does in a manner

peculiarly worthy of that amiable and gentle spirit which was in him, not in the positive and dictatorial form of a law, but by pronouncing a blessing on those who practise them. This mode of teaching, indeed, is manifestly proper, where it is not the practising of any single virtue, or abstaining from any one evil act, that is enjoined; but a disposition, a habit is to be acquired: where the soul is to be adorned with the several graces which will make it beautiful in God's sight. In this manner then our Lord inculcates humility, contrition, meekness, earnest longing after righteousness, mercy, purity, a desire to make peace, and a willingness to suffer persecution for his sake: — all of them virtues which are contrary to our corrupt nature, contrary to the love of the world and the love of ourselves; but peculiarly adapted to fit and prepare the soul for the habitations of the blessed, and the presence of God. — Having recommended to his disciples the practice of these, which may be considered as more peculiarly Gospel virtues, he exhorts them to live in the constant and open performance of their duty; re-

minding them that their's is an important and a conspicuous situation; — that they are like salt, to purify mankind; like a lamp to enlighten the world; like a city set on a hill, an object to which the eyes of men will be continually turned. He enjoins them therefore to "let their light shine before men; that others seeing their good works may be thereby led to glorify their Father which is in heaven." — Thus our Saviour, in the beginning of his Sermon, enjoins the practice of moral righteousness, of good works; he commands that they should be performed openly; not, we may be sure, that there should be an ostentatious display of righteousness; but yet, that it should be practised in such a manner that others may see it; and seeing it, may learn to go and do likewise, to the praise and glory of God.

And now, lest any one should suppose that in establishing the Gospel he intended to overturn the moral law, he proceeds to correct this false notion, and at the same time to explain, in several instances, its object and intent as renewed and promulgated by himself. "Think not," saith he,

"that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—And then he goes on to shew what is that greater righteousness which he requires in his disciples, by extending and enlarging some of the precepts which had been given of old.

From what has been said it will probably appear, that when Jesus Christ spoke of fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, he alluded only to the moral commandments contained in the Law, and to the moral and religious instruction given by the Prophets. Some persons however have supposed that our Lord

had in view the types and figures of the Law, and the predictions relating to him delivered by the prophets; all which he very exactly fulfilled; so as to lay a firm foundation for our faith in "him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write." I have, therefore, considered the subject in this view, and have shewn you in two discourses how Christ was most remarkably pointed out by various figures in the history of the Israelites and the law of Moses; and by many prophecies delivered at different times, by different persons, under every variety of circumstance and expression, yet all uniting in the most perfect harmony, all bearing witness (as if it had been the voice of one man) to him who was "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the joy of his people Israel."—I now come to consider in this discourse, how Christ, as a teacher of righteousness, fulfilled the moral and religious precepts contained in the Law and the Prophets.

"Think not that I am come to destroy"—do not suppose that my object, as a public teacher, is to put an end to all which

has been taught by those who have gone before me, and release my followers from the obligations which Moses and the Prophets have laid upon them: — "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" — my object is fully to ratify and confirm what they have enjoined,—to ratify it by my authority, and confirm it by new and more powerful sanctions:—fully to enforce and explain it; to enlarge its meaning and supply its defects: — fully to perform it in my own person, and enjoin it to my disciples. This it was which our Saviour intended by fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. The Law, (which, proceeding as it did from the God of truth, could not fail to be "holy and just and good,") had been misinterpreted and perverted by the Scribes and Pharisees. They had been scrupulously attentive to the letter, while they neglected the spirit of it. They were regular in their discharge of the smaller duties which it enjoined, but omitted its weighter matters. The great concern therefore of Christ in his teaching, was to remove the errors and false interpretations which had been introduced, to open the spiritual meaning of the Law, and inculcate higher

notions of God, a purer worship and more perfect obedience to the moral precepts. Thus opposing the Scribes and doctors, he was falsely accused of an intention to subvert the whole Law; and perhaps some of his followers might imagine that, under his dispensation, they should be released from the restraints which the law of God laid upon their passions, and be able to indulge their vicious desires to excess. This false and dangerous notion our Saviour sets himself to oppose. He tells them, that so far from overturning the moral law, one great end of his coming into the world was to confirm and establish it: that sooner should heaven and earth pass away and perish, than one iota of this law should fail: that a superior righteousness and higher degrees of holiness would be required under the purer form of religion which he was about to establish: and that therefore a man's worthiness as a disciple of the Church on earth, or as a candidate for the glories of heaven, would depend upon his observance of the moral law; — even of those commandments which might appear to be of the least importance.

Thus then, you see, our Saviour strongly and distinctly enforced obedience to the law of God; not to the ceremonial, but to the moral law. The ceremonies were to come to an end, when the Jews ceased to be a peculiar people; and were to be succeeded by simpler ordinances, and a more spiritual worship. But the moral commandments were of perpetual obligation; they were given to all people. They could not cease, because the nations of the world were to be brought to the knowledge of God. The more widely that knowledge was spread, the more intimately men became acquainted with their Maker and Redeemer, the more were they obliged to practice that righteousness which the Lord loveth, to imitate him in goodness and truth, "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God." When all the families of the earth were to be gathered together in one, to be "built up a spiritual house" in Him in whom they were to be blessed, they would be reminded, that "holiness becometh his house for ever;" that there must "in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither

whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

But our blessed Lord not only continued and confirmed the law of God; He extended and enlarged it. That restraint which was before laid upon the words and actions, he imposed upon the thoughts and desires. His precepts were designed to make the heart pure; to preserve the spirit and soul, as well as the body, blameless; to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. He, who knew the hearts of men, knew that from thence proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, murders, thefts, and every kind of wickedness. Like a wise physician of souls, therefore, he struck at the root of the disorder; he cleansed the fountain, that the waters might flow pure and wholesome. — This was one instance in which he enlarged and perfected the law of God. — Another was, that he extended the commandment, so as to forbid the smallest sins of every kind. Under the Gospel, it is not sufficient to abstain from heinous crimes. The least sin is odious in His sight, who cannot look on iniquity. The smallest wilful transgression

is unworthy of a disciple of Christ. The object and endeavour of that blessed Person was to redeem his people from all iniquity, and purify them unto himself, as a peculiar people, a holy nation, — holy, as he which called them is holy — holy in all manner of conversation — perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

In these two instances, then, our Saviour more than fulfilled the law which had before been given by God; he extended it even to the forbidding of the least sin; even to the restraining of an unlawful desire. — It may be useful to observe the strictness of his law in the few commandments which he has explained and enlarged.

" Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," or rather to them of old — to your ancestors, — " Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca," that is, whosoever shall call any one an empty vain fellow, " shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever

shall say, Thou fool," whosoever shall call him worthless and profane, "shall be in danger of hell fire."(*a*) In other words — Do not suppose that it is only an act of the greatest violence to another person that will expose you to the wrath of God and to severe punishment: any needless expression of anger, and much more the suffering it to break out into indecent intemperate language, will make you liable to suffer God's judgments; for it is a sign of an evil and malicious heart; and God will not look with favour on him who is at enmity with his neighbour. (*b*) Here, you see, the law against murder is enlarged by our Saviour into a law against the indulgence of angry passions, though only in words, — against the indulgence of needless anger, even in thought. Anger cherished in the heart will break forth into open violence. It is the beginning of that which ends in murder. (*c*) Christ, therefore, forbids the indulgence of the passion, and every the least expression of it.

(*a*) Matt. v. 21, 22. (*b*) See v. 23, et seq.

(*c*) See St. John. "He that hateth his brother, is a murderer."

The next commandment which he notices is that against adultery. The law delivered to the Israelites was, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." But what saith our Lord? "I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Here the crime is transferred, (if we may say so), from the outward act to the inward desire. The law is no longer, Do not commit a sinful act: It is now, Do not conceive a sinful thought. "Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin." (*a*) The sin therefore is prevented, by subduing the cause of it. The bitter fruit is destroyed, by nipping it in the bud.

Again,—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; neither by the earth, for it is his footstool." Here is a plain instance of the superior holiness required under the Gospel. "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely (*b*)," said

(*a*) James i. 15. (*b*) Lev. xix. 12.

God under the Law. "Swear not at all," said Christ when he preached the Gospel. As we advance in our knowledge of God and his perfections, so should our reverence and love of him increase, and both reverence and love should make us abstain from any light or unworthy mention of his name.

Again, — "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This was the law of retaliation, commanded by God for the direction of the judge (*a*) in several cases where an injury had been committed: but the Pharisees had perverted this, and made it a rule for the conduct of private persons. What said our Saviour to this? So far from permitting his disciples to take into their own hands the redress of any injury, he commands them not to be eager to seek redress from the law. So far from giving them a right of retaliation or revenge, he directs them to submit to a second blow, rather than return the first. "I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever

(*a*) Exod. xxi. 24. Deut. xix. 21.

shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also. And whosoever will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." If strict obedience to the letter of these precepts be not required, yet it is clear that in their spirit they enjoin the opposite of a quarrelsome, a litigious, a revengeful temper. So superior is our great Lawgiver to all others, that instead of providing the means of redress, he prevents the necessity of seeking it, by inculcating a mild and peaceable disposition.

Once more.—" Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." Here again was a perversion and misinterpretation of the law. The former part of this commandment was given by God; the latter was added by the Pharisees. Yet even God himself did not enjoin his people such a perfect law of charity as Christ has given to us. " I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father

which is in heaven." This is the perfection of love. It is the love which God is constantly shewing to his unworthy creatures. It is the love which the Son of God manifested towards us, when he died for us while we were yet sinners. This is the charity required under the Gospel.

In this manner our blessed Lord improved and enlarged the commandments of the Law. Thus he led his disciples to higher degrees of virtue than had been required of the Israelites, though they were the people of God. He set before them a more perfect rule than the Almighty had thought fit to give to his chosen people when he was their King and Judge. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect," is the precept with which Jesus Christ concludes this part of his sermon. Principally perhaps, and in the first instance, it relates to that exalted kind of charity which he had just before enjoined them. But it may safely be extended into a general precept; and sets before us the true principle upon which the laws of Christ are framed, the ground and rule of our obedience. The principle upon which the

laws of Christ are framed is the correcting of every evil disposition in the heart, the subduing of every thing which opposes the will of God, and making man as perfect as the weakness of his nature will permit. And the rule and measure of our obedience is the Divine Perfection. This is the model which we are to copy; the height of excellence to which we are to aspire.

You see, then, how Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, as a teacher of righteousness. Every moral precept which had been enjoined by them was improved, and enlarged, and refined by our Lord. Every moral duty which is to be found in the Old Testament is required under the New, — required to be performed with more diligent care, and in greater perfection. Every thing is extended and exalted under the Gospel. New motives are added, and more powerful sanctions to enforce obedience. The command which before restrained the hand from an evil deed, now restrains the heart from a wicked thought. The promise of a temporal possession in the land of Canaan is changed to the prospect of a heavenly and eternal reward in the

presence of God. Gratitude for deliverance from the bondage of Egypt is exceeded by thankfulness for redemption from the slavery of sin and Satan. And every motive and every principle, which the Law provided, is far surpassed by that animating and invigorating principle of a true and lively faith, which turns the heart immediately to God and Christ; to his atonement for pardon, to his life for its example, to his spirit for sanctification and grace. This swallows up all lower feelings, all meaner motives; and makes the desire of pleasing God, and the fear of offending him, the governing principle of a Christian's conduct.

The moral law, then, is enforced with all its strictness under the Gospel. It acquires even greater force, as its precepts are more full and perfect, its motives more spiritual and powerful, its sanctions more awful and alarming. Hence it is that both Jesus Christ and his apostles inculcate so constantly and earnestly the necessity of holiness and good works: that one of them enjoins his converts to "be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without re-

buke (*a*);" another points out the vanity of faith without works (*b*); a third commands the Christians to whom he is writing to " add to their faith virtue (*c*), that they may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and a fourth cautions his brethren that they should not be deceived, telling them that " whosoever sinneth hath not seen God, neither known him," " whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God." (*d*) No words can express too strongly the perfect holiness which is required of the disciples of Jesus, the necessity of abstaining from all sin, of cleansing themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, of following the steps of him who did no sin, and being holy as he is holy.

From hence you may perceive with how little justice we are sometimes accused of not preaching the Gospel, because we press upon you the practice of good works. Did not Christ then preach the Gospel when he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, which

(*a*) Phil. ii. 15. (*b*) James, ii. 17, 20, 24.
(*c*) 2 Peter, i. 5, 8. (*d*) 1 John, iii. 6, 10.

is employed in explaining and enforcing the moral duties of the law? Did the Apostles not teach the Gospel, when, perhaps, the greater part of each Epistle is dovoted to inculcating the diligent practice of every virtue? Did St. James not preach the Gospel when he proved the worthlessness of faith, unless it be followed by good works? Did St. Paul and St. Peter preach the Law, and not the Gospel, because with holy earnestness, and all the warmth of parental affection, they exhort their disciples to flee from sin, and do the thing that is right; pointing out the peculiar duties which belong to every station (*a*); enu-

(*a*) The reader is requested to attend particularly to the directions given by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, with respect to the kind of instruction which he would have them adopt. In the Epistles addressed to these persons, we find rules for teaching those committed to their care, which are almost entirely confined to moral duties, grounded (it must be particularly observed) on the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, which are introduced in the most easy, artless, and affecting manner. "The things which become sound doctrine," which Titus is enjoined to speak, are instructions regarding the moral duties incumbent on the old and young. That which the Apostle commands Titus to "*affirm constantly*," is, "that they which have believed in God might be *careful* to maintain good works:" — φροντιζωσι — "omni studio operam dent." — *Schleusner.*

merating almost every virtue which adorns human nature, and every vice which will bring it to shame and ruin? If, indeed, we were to teach you to follow after holiness, without directing you to the principle of holiness, — namely, the love and fear of God, and faith in your blessed Redeemer; — if we should tell you to work out your own salvation, without exhorting you to ask grace and assistance from that Spirit which worketh in you both to will, and to do, — then indeed we should be found false witnesses of God; no less than if we should teach the unholy doctrine, that good works are not a necessary condition of salvation. But while we bid you trust entirely to the mercy of God in Christ for pardon and acceptance, and to the aid of his Spirit for strength to enable you to think and do those things which of yourselves you are unable to think or do; shall it be said that we falsify the word of God, because we teach that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that it is only by patient continuance in well-doing that you can hope to obtain glory, and honour, and immortality? Shall we, in short,

be accused of preaching the Law, because we tell you, "that being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," you must practise the law? Not while it is remembered that Jesus Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it: — not while a few only be recollected of those many precepts by which he and his apostles enforced the strictest performance of moral duty: — not while that is borne in mind which our Lord has made the express condition of obtaining everlasting life — "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments (*a*): — not with any reason shall we be accused as false teachers, so long as that description of the last judgment shall stand part of the Gospel, which our Lord concluded with the solemn declaration that they who shall have neglected to perform works of charity "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (*b*)

Let me entreat you then, my brethren, to examine thoroughly, and understand

(*a*) Matt. xix. 17. (*b*) Matt. xxv. 46.

well, the true nature of the Gospel-dispensation. It is the rule of your faith and your obedience. Both are equally and indispensably necessary: the faith which worketh by love; the works which are the fruits and the proof of faith. The Gospel has laid open to you the fall of man; the corruption of your nature; your enmity against God; your redemption by Jesus Christ, with all that he did and suffered for you; the presence of the Holy Spirit among his people, without whose aid their strength is but weakness; and the rich blessing of eternal life which God has prepared for them that love him. These are the leading articles of your faith. And without that faith, which believes entirely what God has taught; which throws itself with unfeigned submission upon his redeeming love; which acknowledges every good thing, the will to purpose, and the power to do, to be his free gift; which looks up to him as the author of every blessing which can make his creature holy here and happy hereafter! — without such a faith it is impossible to please God.— But the Gospel teaches with

equal plainness, that this faith must purify the heart; must be made perfect by works. It teaches that Christians are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" that Jesus Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." It sets before us the love of God in our redemption, and the unspeakable riches of his grace, as the most powerful motive to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work: the powerful working of God in us, as an argument for working out our own salvation: and the greatness and certainty of the future reward, to persuade us not to be weary in well-doing. Every thing in the Gospel is practical. Faith is the ground and main spring of holiness; and the terrors and mercies of the Lord are employed, the one to turn us from our evil ways, the other to fix our hearts on God.

Seeing these things, then, my brethren, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

How should the love of Christ constrain you to follow his steps, and conform yourselves to his image? How should the perfection of his commandment induce you to perfect holiness in the fear of God? How should the greatness of the promised reward animate you to press toward the mark with your most vigorous exertion for the prize of your high calling?— Since he has redeemed you from the curse of the law, see that you do not, by a neglect of his mercy, again fall under its sentence. Reflect upon the blessings which you enjoy, and the account which you must render of them. Surely in proportion to the strictness of the law which has been given you, to the purity of the example which has been set before you, to the powerful assistance which is offered you, and the blessedness of reward which is held out to you, will be the severity of punishment, if you do not cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast," and under the law of Moses "every transgres-

sion and disobedience received a just recompence; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which was spoken by the Lord." (*a*)

(*a*) Heb. ii. 2, 3.

SERMON IX.

The Preacher of the Gospel.

Luke, iv. 18.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel.

This is the passage which our Lord selected from the book of the evangelical prophet for the subject of his first sermon at Nazareth. "This day," said he, "is this text fulfilled in your ears." Whatever cautious reserve he might afterwards think fit to use, or however he might then abstain from fully declaring himself to be the Messiah, it does not appear that at the commencement of his ministry he hesitated to make his pretensions known. Perhaps it will be more correct to say that through the whole

course of his life he never concealed his claim to the Messiahship; more particularly in the characters of a Sacrifice for sin, and a Teacher sent from God. His loftier titles of a Prince and a Saviour he did not assume, lest he should give occasion to the Jews to seek the things upon which their hearts were set, a temporal deliverance and worldly greatness.

It is in the character of a public teacher that he announces himself to the people of Nazareth; the revealer of a dispensation full of mercy and benignity, of help to the needy and succour to the distressed. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

From this text we are led to consider our Saviour as the Preacher of the Gospel, addressing himself more particularly to the poor.

The word Gospel, as is well known, signifies good tidings, and the original Greek or Hebrew word is sometimes so rendered. Thus in the text, as it stands in the prophecy of Isaiah, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings." Thus the angels are said to have brought to the Bethlehemite shepherds, "good tidings of great joy;" the apostles declared to the Jews "glad tidings" in the fulfilment of the promise made to their fathers; and St. Paul quotes from the prophet Isaiah, "how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

The true meaning of the word Gospel suggests this important reflection, that the Christian religion is peculiarly *a revelation of mercy and loving-kindness*, exhibiting in a wonderful manner the goodness of God, and rich in blessings to his unworthy creatures. Every part of this dispensation, as it was published by Jesus Christ, will be found to correspond with this description.

I. The first and leading doctrine of the Gospel is, that of an atonement made for sin; an atonement for the sins of all mankind made by the precious blood-shedding of the Son of God. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (*a*) The sin of their first parents, and their own multiplied transgressions, had placed all mankind in a state of enmity with the King of Heaven. Jesus Christ came to "preach peace to them that were afar off and to them that were nigh," and to reconcile the world to God by his death. (*b*) The salvation which he brought down from heaven included pardon of sin, deliverance from the power of the evil one, and acceptance through faith in the great atonement.

And what more joyful tidings could be published to the world than these? When Jesus declared that he was "come to seek and to save that which was lost," his words contained an assurance of comfort, such as mankind had not known since the day

(*a*) John, iii. 17. (*b*) Eph. ii. 17; Rom. v. 10.

that Adam was driven from Paradise. It was an assurance of redemption from the tyranny of sin, and of him who is the author of all evil; and of peace and reconciliation with the Giver of all good things:— an assurance of rest to the weary, and consolation to the afflicted; to those who were weary and heavy laden with the burthen of their sins, and who mourned in a spirit of true penitence under their separation from God. It was an assurance, moreover, of the loving-kindness of God, of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, of his readiness to give all good things to those for whose sake he spared not his own Son.

The first article of a Christian's faith, then, is full of peace and comfort. The Gospel dispensation is founded in mercy. And this mercy is not the less, nor should the joy of those who receive it be abated, because freely as it is given by God, it is yet subject to certain conditions on the part of man. "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. He that believeth in me hath everlasting life. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Repentance, faith and obedience; and their necessary

effects, an entire forsaking of sin, a steadfast reliance on the merits of the great propitiation, and a sincere endeavour after holiness; — these are conditions, required of all who would receive the blessings of the Gospel. Nor let us deem the value of the gift diminished, because the bountiful Donor has prescribed terms on which it shall be accepted. Let us rather admire the excellence of that dispensation which displays the various attributes of the Most High in all their full perfection. As in the satisfaction made for sin is exhibited an union of justice with mercy, the same union — the same regard for his glory and the welfare of man, is eminently conspicuous in these conditions. Without them the moral government of the world would be at an end, social happiness would be destroyed, and man would be let loose to indulge his passions, unrestrained by love or fear. The value of the gift, therefore, is enhanced by the very limitations annexed to it. — But, indeed, it is impossible to conceive a dispensation from God which does not make similar demands of those to whom it is given. For sin unrepented remains in a

state of enmity with him, and the unbeliever refuses all acknowledgment of his word and submission to his authority. The fulfilment of these conditions is, in truth, only a practical confession that the revelation is from God.

II. The second of these conditions deserves a more attentive consideration. Faith in Jesus Christ, and in his atoning sacrifice, is a distinguishing feature of the Gospel. Our Lord teaches us that "no man cometh to the Father but by him," and complained to the Jews, "ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." This was made the condition of receiving his favours, and excellent things are spoken of it by his apostles. By faith we are said to receive remission of sins: by faith we have access into the grace wherein we stand: by faith we are saved, we are justified, we are sanctified, we overcome the world, we are kept by the power of God unto salvation.

It is manifest that every messenger from God should be received by those to whom he is sent; that a dispensation can only be

effectual when it obtains the assent of those to whom it is made known. In other words, faith is required to receive a revelation, and him who brings it. But faith, in the disciples of Jesus Christ, is much more than an acknowledgment of his authority, and an assent to the doctrines which he taught. It is trust and confidence in him; steady trust in his mercy, and entire confidence in his sacrifice to procure our pardon and salvation. It is a renouncing of all merit in ourselves, for the sake of pleading effectually his prevailing intercession in our behalf.

And is not the declaration that "the just shall live by faith," full of comfort? For here man — frail, imperfect man, corrupt by nature, and continually offending — has no longer to build his hopes of acceptance on his own defective obedience. He is permitted, nay enjoined, to rely on an all-sufficient sacrifice and a perfect obedience, performed for him by the Son of God. The humble and fearful servant of God, while he bewails his imperfections, may here rejoice in contemplating those riches of grace and mercy, which are able to supply his defects, and make his unworthy endeavours

acceptable. Nor let me forget to add, that faith is a principle of obedience; an active and living principle; operating upon the best and noblest feelings of our nature; and stirring up all that is within us, in gratitude for the mercies vouchsafed us, and in imitation of the divine perfections, to the practice of sublime piety, enlarged benevolence, and entire holiness. So that while we are thus permitted to take comfort under a sense of our defects, we are at the same time encouraged to the faithful discharge of every duty.

III. One of the prominent articles of our faith is a belief in the Holy Ghost. The promise of the Spirit which had been made to the people of God under the old dispensation was renewed by Jesus Christ, and abundantly fulfilled first in the extraordinary effusion upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards in the gracious assistance afforded to every believer as he hath need.

The doctrine which is taught on this subject is, that all mankind are weak, and prone to evil, and unable of themselves to

think or do any thing that is good; but that the Holy Spirit, given by the Father for the sake of Jesus Christ, worketh in them both to will and to do. "It is the Spirit," said Jesus, "that quickeneth;" and to those, therefore, who should believe on him, he promised the gracious gift in all the abundance and refreshment of "rivers of living water." (*a*) More particularly he assured his Apostles that he would send the Spirit to comfort them in his absence, to guide them into all truth, and to reprove, or convince the world, concerning sin and righteousness and judgment (*b*); to convince mankind of the sin of unbelief, of the righteousness of Christ, of the just judgment of God.

You will not fail, my Christian brethren, to take comfort in the tidings here announced, of a heavenly Teacher and Comforter, who may support your weakness, inform your ignorance, and enable you to do and suffer according to the will of God. You will remember that the discourse in which our Lord made to his

(*a*) John, vii. 38. (*b*) John, xvi. 8.

Apostles the gracious and repeated promise of this blessing, was expressly designed for their consolation. You will call to mind his remarkable assurance, that the Spirit should more than supply the want of his personal presence; that it was even expedient for his disciples that he should go away, for unless he went away the Comforter would not come to them. While you feel and lament your weakness, you will rejoice in the presence of One who helpeth your infirmities; and as you daily experience his support in temptation and distress, you will thankfully acknowledge the power that worketh in you, and pray that He will yet more and more "shed abroad the love of God in your hearts," and bring forth the fruits of his holy influence in "all goodness and righteousness and truth."

IV. It is the business of religion to lay open the future to view, and declare what shall be hereafter; that by strongly exciting the hopes and awakening the fears of men, they may be led to the practice of holiness, and the forsaking of sin. In this the hea-

then teachers failed remarkably. The doctrine of a future state, as it was taught in the schools of philosophy, was little calculated to produce any useful influence on the heart, or any practical effect upon the life and conversation. And even the Israelites, by directing their eyes to a temporal reward in the promised land, in a great measure probably lost sight of the excellence of its eternal antitype. So much of darkness had enveloped the truth, that Jesus Christ is said to have "brought life and immortality to light." Most clearly did he tell of the things that shall come hereafter; of the future judgment, the happiness reserved for the righteous, and the torments prepared for the ungodly. That happiness is strictly a reward of virtue, and those torments are a punishment of sin. And these will be apportioned according to the deserts of every individual with a wisdom that cannot err, and a justice that knows neither favour nor dislike. Thus the investigation which will take place when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, affords the highest encouragement to virtue, and the most powerful dissuasive from vice.

But further — from the manner in which

the end of the righteous and that of the wicked are described, we infer that the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, will in a great measure consist in the exercise of those affections which they indulged upon earth. The perfection of love, of purity, and heavenly mindedness, together with an enlarged and vigorous use of the mental powers, will probably constitute a large portion of the enjoyment of " the righteous, when they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father :" the pangs of a self-tormenting conscience, the tumult of disordered passions, the anguish of unrestrained and impure desires, these will greatly contribute to make up the sufferings of the " cursed in that fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." Thus virtue in a higher state of existence will be its own reward, vice its own punishment.

What abundant cause of thankfulness have we to God that he hath graciously revealed by his Son those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive ! It is scarce possible to imagine a state more

deplorable than that of men endowed with noble faculties, and adorned with art and science, yet either wilfully blind respecting the future, or searching in vain for that which may gratify their ardent desires; bewildered in their enquiries, and sitting down in hopeless despair, or careless unconcern; or resting content with some conception neither satisfactory to the mind, nor calculated to produce any useful effect on the heart. Yet with this darkness was heathen philosophy overspread; less conducive perhaps to virtue than the gross superstitions received by the vulgar. Not such the blessed state of light, and cheering expectation, and joyful hope, in which we are permitted to walk. Here, while on the one side our evil desires are guarded, and our passions repressed, by the fear of a punishment dark and degrading; our faith is strengthened, our labours are encouraged, our sorrows are comforted, our affections are elevated, by the prospect of happiness inconceivably great, sublime, and pure. Say, my Christian brethren, when your souls have been pierced with anguish, when you have sunk under the weight of sorrow, or trembled

with all the weakness of fear; when you have shuddered at the apprehension of losing that which has twined itself round your heart, or in contemplation of your own dissolution; has not a cheering light broken in upon you, as you have listened to the "voice from heaven," which proclaimed, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord?" Or while you have been toiling up the path of life, beset with difficulties and temptations, struggling in conflict with the powers of darkness and the corruptions of your own heart, have you not felt a powerful support in the gladdening, though solemn prospect of that day, when you shall stand before the throne of God? have you not been encouraged to "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, since ye know that your labour will not be in vain in the Lord?"

The knowledge of the spiritual nature of the future reward and punishment is likewise to be received as a blessed and joyful revelation, as it tends to enlarge and exalt our views, and supplies a high and holy motive to the practice of virtue. For

here we learn to consider this life as the beginning of the next. As an indulgence in sin is departing from the living God, and entering upon that region of darkness and error which will be hereafter shut out from his presence; so the practice of virtue, though it be feeble and imperfect here, is an introduction to a new and a better state, where will be neither frailty nor imperfection. Every passion which is subdued, every grace which is strengthened in the heart of the Christian, is a step in his progress towards perfection, and tends to make him "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." "The path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The favour of God rests upon it; and it leads direct to that presence where is the fulness of joy. — In every respect, then, the revelation of the future state in the Christian dispensation, is a gospel or glad tidings to the servants of God.

V. Let us proceed from the doctrinal to the preceptive part of our religion. What is the nature of that code of laws which has been delivered to us by our blessed Master?

The ordinances which he has instituted are few and simple; the worship which he has taught is spiritual; the morality enjoined is pure and sublime. The Evangelical law is faithfully delineated by the prophetic song of the Psalmist: "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes: the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (*a*)

The law of Christ bearing these characters of purity, brightness, truth, and power to convert the soul, ought to afford delight to every faithful disciple. For who but must desire to be "cleansed from his secret faults," no less than to be "kept back from presumptuous sins?" Who but must rejoice in a victory over the power of

(*a*) Ps. xix. 7—10.

evil, and in being created after the divine image in righteousness and true holiness? (*a*) Who but must exult in being "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God?" (*b*) Who that has groaned under the burthen of sin, or under that heavy yoke of discipline which, as St. Peter told the first disciples, they on whom it was imposed were not able to bear, but must listen gladly to that voice which promises rest to them that labour and are heavy laden, and readily submit themselves to that easy yoke and light burthen which Jesus lays upon his disciples?

What is the principle of our duty to God, under the Gospel? Love. What is the principle which at once directs and comprehends all our duties to our fellow-creatures? Love. — Surely there must be something engaging, something delightful in that law which works by means of our finest feelings, which is fulfilled in the exercise of our best affections, and trains its scholars by so gentle a discipline to a con-

(*a*) Eph. iv. 24. (*b*) Rom. viii. 21.

formity with the image of God. For "God is Love."

The Christian dispensation, then, is in all its parts a revelation of mercy and benignity; and they who announced it to the world were harbingers of peace, heralds who proclaimed the greatest blessing that God could bestow or fallen man receive. "How beautiful appear upon the mountains the feet of the joyful messenger; of him that announceth peace! Of the joyful messenger of good tidings; of him that announceth salvation! Of him, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!" (*a*)

The character of our Lord, and the style of his discourses would, if duly considered, greatly confirm the view here taken of his religion. The Spirit which rested upon him, the Spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love, infused itself into every part of his conduct. He "went about doing good," and confirming the truth of the religion which he taught by deeds becoming its

(*a*) Isa. lii. 7. — Bp. Lowth's translation.

author. His miracles were not merely a display of Divine power; they were acts of benevolence. He exhibited not only benevolence, but kindness; not only love but tenderness. He sustained the bruised reed, and cherished the last spark in the smoking flax. He seemed without an effort to send the doctrines and duties which he inculcated to the hearts of men, and to engage the best affections of his hearers in his service.

But farther; he was no morose or austere preceptor. He did not shun the haunts of men, nor turn his back upon innocent mirth; nor fear lest he should sully his own purity by mixing with publicans and sinners. He laid no heavy burthens on his disciples, but with a kind consideration adapted his precepts to their feelings and their circumstances; laying it down as a principle of his religion,—a principle which he took frequent occasion to illustrate by his practice — that the Almighty is no rigorous task-master, but will dispense with a scrupulous attention to ceremonies even of his own institution, if it stand in the way of acts of mercy. It is no small comfort to

those who live under the Gospel, that our heavenly Father is there represented in an amiable and engaging view, full of mercy, and benignity.

The leading character of our Lord's discourses is simplicity, not unadorned with beauty, nor devoid of force and sublimity, but in close and natural union with tenderness and affection. You discover nothing violent or enthusiastic, no ambitious display, no passionate extravagance. Now this, which is the language of truth and love, is peculiarly calculated to win its way to the heart; it is therefore the language of a Saviour to man fallen from his high condition, yet an object of tender compassion. And I cannot but think that the style of our blessed Master's discourses deserves much study on this account by the Christian minister, who would instil sentiments, and awaken affections, becoming the religion which he professes.

Once more — as the teaching of Jesus Christ was free from all violence and extravagance, so was it for the most part devoid of terror. He soothed, rather than alarmed his hearers; he excited hope, rather than

fear; he animated with the promise of reward, rather than depressed with the threat of punishment; he rather inculcated virtue, than forbade vice; and even this he did, not so much by dry precept, as by pronouncing a blessing upon the practice of it. His manner was cheering and encouraging; calculated to banish despondency, to rouse the indolent, and to inspire that indifference to the world, and that full confidence that all things shall work together for good, which is not only a solid foundation for true happiness, but a source of innocent mirth and cheerfulness. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (*a*) "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (*b*) "Be ye not of doubtful mind." (*c*) "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (*d*)

The religion which we have received, then, as it has been delivered to us by the blessed Jesus, and exhibited in his life and

(*a*) Luke, xii. 32. (*b*) John, xiv. 27.
(*c*) Luke, xii. 29. (*d*) John, xvi. 33.

discourses, has no unamiable or repulsive features; it is full of kindness and benevolence, cheering and encouraging, social and serene. It brings good tidings of great joy to all people, publishing a gracious assurance of pardon and peace, subduing the turbulent and vindictive passions which destroy the happiness of society, banishing the selfish desires which produce uneasiness and discontent, and bringing every thought into subjection to the will of God, that the heart may be at peace with him. Oh, blessed state of grace, where God is in the midst of us, reigning in the hearts of his servants, and leading them with a fatherly hand to his kingdom of glory! While we receive with all thankfulness this dispensation of mercy, let us cultivate in ourselves those graces of peace and good-will, lofty hope and holy joy, which the Spirit, the Comforter, would plant and cherish in us. Let us not arrogate to ourselves the exclusive possession of Gospel privileges; if our views of religion be solemn, let them not be gloomy; but rejoicing in the belief that "God would have all men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth," let us

join with the prophets and apostles in celebrating the praises of Him who "hath anointed One to preach good-tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. (*a*) For ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (*b*)

(*a*) Isa. lxi. &c. (*b*) Isa. lv. 12, 13.

SERMON X.

The Preacher of the Gospel to the Poor.

Luke, iv. 18.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor.

These words form the opening of the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, in which the Messiah is introduced, declaring the office to which Jehovah had anointed him. The expressions of the prophet, as represented in our translation, vary a little from those of the text: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek." The difference is not material. The word

Gospel, if traced to its original meaning, signifies "good tidings;" and they to whom the word preached would prove a joyful message, were, no doubt, the meek, or poor in spirit. Yet, as they are described in the remainder of the passage, under terms which literally denote bodily suffering, it would probably be more correct to preserve the same idea in the first verse: "Jehovah hath anointed me to publish glad tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," — the year of jubilee, of general redemption and release, of forgiveness to the debtor, deliverance to the bondman, and a joyful rest to the whole people. — The poor and afflicted are elsewhere pointed out as peculiarly the objects of divine mercy in the day of salvation. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (*a*)

(*a*) Isa. xli. 17.

The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." (*a*) And in a beautiful passage, which, like that in the text, describes the office of the Messiah and the nature of his kingdom, " with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity the meek of the earth." (*b*) The Psalms of David, particularly those which have a direct reference to Christ, abound in expressions to the same effect. " He hath not despised nor abhorred the low estate of the poor." " The poor shall eat and be satisfied." (*c*) The seven-

(*a*) Isa. xxix. 19. (*b*) Isa. xi. 4.

(*c*) Ps. xxii. 24, 26. A distinction has been made between the words עניים and ענוים, and the latter has been supposed to signify the meek or lowly, while the idea of poverty and affliction is confined to the former. It is proper to mention this, because the word in the text and in Ps. xxii. 26. is that which is said to mean exclusively meek or humble. The propriety of attempting so accurate a distinction, may, perhaps, be called in question. The LXX. have rendered ענוים by the words πτωχοι and πενητες in the text and elsewhere, (Ps. ix. 12 ; x. 12, 17 ; xxii. 26 ; lxix. 32; Isa. xxix. 19.) while on the other hand, in one remarkable passage, Zech. ix. 9. the word עני has received the sense of meekness, both in our own and in the Greek translation. It may not be amiss to remark that in our older translation, both of the Psalms and of Isaiah, the meaning given by the

ty-second Psalm expatiates with peculiar beauty on the blessings which shall attend the reign of an universal King, who can be no other than Messiah himself, the Prince of Peace. It is here remarkable that while the whole earth is said to be filled with his glory, the indigent and oppressed are made the objects of his immediate care. "He shall deliver the poor when he crieth; the needy also, and him that hath no helper. He shall be favourable to the simple and needy, and shall preserve the souls of the poor. He shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong, and dear shall their blood be in his sight."

The words in these passages which are rendered "poor and needy," or "meek and humble," express in their plain and natural sense great affliction, depression, and want. And the promise which is so

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LXX. was followed in the passages quoted above. This has been altered in the later revision, and the sense of meekness has been inserted in the text, while the editors have put the word 'afflicted,' in the margin, which, however, is the literal meaning of עניים, being the participle Paul of ענה, affligere.

continually made of relief to the needy, and comfort to the afflicted, in the days of the Messiah, strongly confirms the view taken of the Christian religion in the last discourse, as being truly a Gospel, a revelation of good tidings; of help in distress, and consolation in sorrow. The same will appear from the images under which the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are represented. Such are those which promise a cure of bodily disorders; "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."(*a*) Such too are the representations drawn from natural objects, of coolness, and fertility, and an abundant supply of water,—images exquisitely delightful to the inhabitants of a country which was subject to long heat and violent storms: "a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. (*b*) He shall come down like rain upon the

(*a*) Isa. xxv. 5, 6. (*b*) Isa. xxxii. 2.

mown grass, as showers that water the earth. (*a*) In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert; and the parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water." (*b*)

But the passages before quoted lead us to consider the Gospel dispensation as not only full of grace to all people, but extending its blessings more particularly to the poor and needy. And this is the more deserving of consideration, because it was deemed by our Lord a circumstance so remarkable as to be noticed among the proofs of his mission, which he pointed out to the Baptist's disciples: "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." (*c*) He "in the same hour," as St. Luke informs us, "cured many of their infirmities:" "tell John," said he, "the miracles which you have seen me perform, which are not only proofs of a Divine power, but a

(*a*) Ps. lxxii. 6. (*b*) Isa. xxxv. 6, 7.
(*c*) Matt. xi. 4, 5.

fulfilment also of prophecy; and add moreover this circumstance, which he will recognise as one of the objects for which the Messiah was anointed, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them;" — and blessed is he who is not offended at the doctrine which is taught, or at him who delivers it. One of his discourses also which St. Luke has recorded, begins with pronouncing a blessing upon the poor, adding this remarkable reason, that their's is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, or of heaven, when the phrase was used by our Lord, signified, not the future state of the blessed, but that state which he was then establishing upon earth; and the words have this import, that the poor and distressed are true and proper members of the Christian church; the offers of grace, though tendered to all, will be most readily accepted by such as are least entangled in worldly snares. A similar blessing is pronounced by our Lord, in the beginning of his sermon on the mount, "on the poor in spirit," by which he is generally supposed to have intended the humble and lowly minded. It should seem that he who was

constantly employing the language of the Prophets adopted a mode which was common with them, of uniting in his discourses a literal with a figurative meaning; and perhaps one of the most important rules which can be laid down in the interpretation of the Scriptures, whether of the Old or New Testament, is that these two senses should not be hastily separated. That the religion of Jesus offers itself to the humble or poor in spirit, and is peculiarly a blessing to such, needs no lengthened proof, since that is the temper which is required of all who would embrace it. And when you consider the circumstances already mentioned, together with the fact that Jesus Christ addressed his discourses more particularly to the lower orders, you will not doubt that the Scriptures were fulfilled in their literal sense, which described the poor as the objects of divine mercy.

I would now proceed, in continuation of the subject treated in my last discourse, to shew how the Christian religion, which was worthy of acceptation among all people,

was more particularly a message of good tidings to the poor.

To be convinced of this, little more is necessary than to recollect the condition of the lower orders before the promulgation of Christianity. The poor, that is, the labouring part of the community, were not, as now, hired servants or workmen, fed, clothed, or at least paid for their labour. They were slaves. And slavery, odious as its features at all times are in the eyes of men of free and generous sentiments, had then a character of ferocity on the one hand, and of suffering on the other, unknown in the present day. The slave was entirely at the disposal of his master, either for life or death. And the punishment inflicted, whatever it might be, was disgraceful and cruel; if by scourging, it was attended with circumstances of barbarity; if by death, it was by crucifixion, the most lingering and painful of all. The gladiatorial shews, the favourite sports of the Romans, were exhibitions of slaves condemned to fight for the amusement of the spectators. And of the inhumanity of these we may judge from the circumstance that one of the emperors,

naturally a humane man, is said to have been rendered cruel by frequently attending them; and the same cause is reported to have given a greater character of ferocity to the Roman people. In what I have here stated, I do not mean that the condition of slavery was not in many instances relieved of its harsher features; nor that the lower orders were, without distinction, slaves. I speak of the general hardships endured by that unhappy race; and of their number some conjecture may be formed by knowing that in Athens, the boasted seat of freedom, the number of slaves was nearly twenty times that of the free citizens; and that a wealthy Roman had several thousand employed upon his estates. Nay, we read of ten thousand gladiators exhibited in a single show; and that the blood shed in the most destructive wars, did not equal that of these unhappy beings slaughtered in such spectacles.

But if the civil condition of the lower orders excites our compassion, their moral state, we may be sure, was far worse. For slavery has a natural tendency to degrade the man, and bring him down to a level with

the brute whose employment he shares. The finer feelings of our nature will be cherished, and the nobler sentiments will be expressed by those who are free from subjection to another's will. Even the limited speculations of the philosophers therefore were placed beyond the reach of the poor. Gross darkness, we know, had overspread the heathen world; and few and feeble could be the rays of knowledge that cheered or informed those who sate in the thickest gloom and shadow of death; unless indeed they received the tales of pagan superstition, which were little calculated to improve their morals, or exalt their hopes; while the religious ceremonies, whether of polished or of barbarous nations, encouraged the most profane impiety and licentiousness.

Observe now, I beseech you, the change which took place in the condition of the lower orders with the introduction of Christianity, and say if it be not a Gospel to them. In the first place, the blessed Author of this religion has conferred a dignity and an ornament upon poverty by

himself, "though he was rich, becoming poor." We are even told that he took upon himself the form of a slave; and the death of a slave, we know, he died. As he thus ennobled a state of poverty, so many of his precepts tended to improve and exalt it in the eyes of his disciples. "Sell that ye have, and give alms." "Distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind." Nay, so highly did he esteem this virtue of charity, and so mercifully did he extend his protection to the poor, that in his sublime description of the future judgment, the sole enquiry which he institutes is concerning acts of benevolence to the hungry, the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick, the captives; accepting such acts as proofs of faith in him, and uniting his meaner brethren with himself in the closest bond of interest and affection.

The effects of such precepts and such an example were speedily visible in the Christian Church, where one of the first acts recorded by the sacred historian was a community of goods voluntarily and unanimously

instituted. And though this, from the very nature of society, could not long continue, yet the relief of the poor has been at all times an object of great interest among Christians. "The poor," said the Almighty to Moses, "shall never cease from among you." The disciple of Jesus living under a purer and more exalted dispensation, views the existence of distress as a perpetual obligation to the exercise of benevolence, and "opens his hand wide to his brother, to the poor, and the needy, in his land." (*a*)

Thus the worldly circumstances of the lower orders were greatly improved by the promulgation of Christianity. That blessed dispensation has effected an unspeakable change in the whole face of society, by softening the manners, and purifying the hearts of men. But in this change they have partaken most largely who were placed in the lowest rank. They have received the gift of liberty, of instruction, and of equal participation in the protection afforded by the laws, and in the privileges of that community to which they belong. Since the

(*a*) Deut. xv. 11.

days of our Saviour, poverty — humble, decent poverty — is no longer despised. It is the garb worn by the Son of God, and excites in the heart of every true disciple a peculiar feeling of pious and tender regard.

But it is time to proceed to other and more important considerations, shewing that the Christian religion is in a high degree acceptable to the poor; and this, in respect both of its doctrines and its duties.

That is an awful saying of our Lord: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Whence is this difficulty? Has the Almighty laid grievous burthens on any of his creatures? or obstructed the entrance to the path of life? No! But by his wise appointment, religion and a love of the world are opposed to each other. They therefore who possess a large share of worldly blessings are not the persons most likely to be affected by the offers which a spiritual dispensation makes to them. This

is not peculiar to the Gospel. Moses, in the spirit of prophecy, assigns the same cause for the rebellious disposition of the Israelites. "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields, and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation." (*a*) If the people of Israel were drawn from their allegiance to Jehovah by the abundance of their worldly possessions, when the enjoyment of those possessions was in some measure expressive of their faith in Him who gave them; much more may such abundance prove a snare and a temptation, when it is no longer the reward promised to obedience. The language of our Lord, and similar expressions used by his Apostles (*b*), placing the world in a state of enmity with God, are no doubt to be referred, in their primary and

(*a*) Deut. xxxii. 13, 14, 15. (*b*) James iv. 4.; 1 John ii. 15.

principal sense, to the time when they were spoken. But it must ever be remembered that the great and perpetual object of our religion is to raise the affections to things above; and they (as many there are in our day) who in the full possession of worldly blessings are at the same time laying up treasure in heaven, will acknowledge that those very blessings are the cause of much difficulty and many temptations; and that constant vigilance is needful, lest the heart be led astray from the source of true happiness, to settle upon objects of present gratification.

To these dangers the poor are not equally exposed. A feeling that earth is not their portion will lead them readily, and, as it were, naturally, to accept the offer of a heavenly inheritance; and the want of present enjoyment quickens a hope of future happiness. The daily pressure of want and discomfort produces a constant reliance on Divine Providence, and a willingness to quit a scene of distress and suffering; — a disposition which is perhaps strengthened by the absence of the finer sensibilities of our nature. Accordingly, in the season of

bitter sorrow, or approaching death, you will find among the lower orders, not perhaps more sublime piety (for this will be the effect of high-wrought feeling, and a sense of the greatness of the sacrifice) but more calm and entire acquiescence, than may be seen in those whose affections must be torn asunder by a stronger effort. — Let me add that the want of learning, though it may sometimes leave the poor a prey to the arts of designing men, yet secures them from those cavils which have often proved a snare to the wise; and disposes them to receive the truth, as it was offered by the apostle, " in simplicity and godly sincerity."

Few then are the temptations offered to the poor, in regard to receiving the first principles of our religion. And I need not expatiate on the blessedness which they may expect in a dispensation which promises rest to the weary, comfort to the mourners, and an abundant supply to the needy and distressed. Many an ear surely has gladly turned to that gracious invitation, " Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money,

come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

The peculiar interest which the poor cannot fail to have in the great and leading doctrines of our holy religion, is indeed an affecting consideration. To them who are toiling with slow and painful steps along the path of life, enduring in its literal fulfilment the sentence passed on their first father, and seeing around and before them discomfort and distress — to such as these how cheering are the accents of the Gospel! The very name of a Saviour is grateful to their ears; the idea of ease under pain and rest from labour is soothing to them; and in the terms in which spiritual blessings are promised, they find a relief from worldly affliction. I cannot but imagine that in the use of figurative language the Holy Spirit would not have us forget the literal application of the terms; and when he promises spiritual refreshment to those who hunger and thirst, he teaches them whither to look for the supply of their bodily wants.

Again, to the ignorant and illiterate, to

whom the various stores of wisdom and knowledge have never been laid open, how delightful is it to hear of a heavenly teacher who will guide them into all truth; to be admitted into a covenant under which God hath promised to put his laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; to have before them an unerring word from which there is no appeal, speaking to their hearts no less than their understanding; to have in that word not learned dissertations on the excellence of virtue, or discourses on nice and difficult points, but the plainest rules of moral conduct interpreted and illustrated by the most perfect example! How profitable is it to have in the order of ministers instituted by our Lord a supply of instruction and advice, of exhortation and comfort; to have those at hand who may explain their difficulties and resolve their doubts; who may pray for them, and teach them how to pray; who may cheer the path of life, and smooth the bed of death!

As the poor have great cause to be thankful that the Almighty has not left the line of their duty to be sought out by them,

but has marked it plainly and distinctly; so the whole of the religious and moral code may be deemed a blessing to them. The ground and principle of all duty is not matter of laborious research; it is simple and affecting. Love to God in Christ Jesus, and to man for his sake! the wisdom of the wisest may labour in vain to invent a principle so simple and affecting, so powerful, so comprehensive. The ordinances of our religion require no costly sacrifices; they are easy to be understood, and edifying in the performance; spiritual in their nature, yet instructing by outward signs. The moral law too is in a great degree favourable to the poor, either by enjoining the exercise of charity towards them; or by teaching them to "endure hardness" and "work with their own hands;" or by directing its force against many sins to which they are least exposed, the sins of pride and ambition, covetousness and earthly mindedness. — The whole of our religion, in short, whether doctrinal or preceptive, is full of comfort to the low and indigent and unhappy. And what wonder? Did it not take its origin in mercy? in mercy to

a fallen and wretched race, driven from Paradise and earthly bliss, doomed to earn their daily bread by daily labour, and to return to the dust from whence they were taken?

If the religion of Jesus then be, like its Divine Author, "full of grace and truth," —of grace more particularly to those to whom worldly gifts have been denied—is it not our duty to spread among our poorer brethren these glad tidings, to render the Gospel amiable in their eyes by our uniform practice of its precepts, to give them a saving knowledge of its doctrines and laws? A right faith in Jesus Christ, and a thorough acquaintance with the truths which he has revealed and taught, cannot fail to produce a powerful and beneficial effect on the hearts which are opened to receive them. The Christian religion exerts on all-pervading influence. It penetrates into every recess; it directs the motives and springs of action; it sways the whole conduct. It trains up loyal subjects, honest servants, industrious labourers, good husbands and wives, good parents and children. How then can it be

dangerous or unwise to teach those principles, which will make a man useful in this life, and wise unto salvation? How can it be any but the highest wisdom, to guard the great mass of a country's population from all the evils of ignorance and superstition? How can it be other than the noblest charity, to disseminate those truths which are a never-failing support in distress, and consolation in sorrow? Let no cold or timid policy, then, make us backward to enlighten the minds of the poor with saving knowledge, and according to the means afforded us and the methods becoming our situation, to publish the tidings of that salvation which our common Father has revealed to be a blessing — the only substantial blessing — whether to the prince or the peasant.

And you, my brethren, whose low condition the Son of God was pleased to assume, if you have lent a willing ear to what has been said; if you have heard with joy that the anointed One was sent to preach good tidings to you; if your hearts have beat at the thought that you are peculiar objects of

your Saviour's love; suffer, I pray you, the word of exhortation. Remember that spiritual gifts must be received in a temper corresponding to them. Though your poverty has called forth the bounty of your heavenly Father, yet you must be poor in spirit that his gifts may be truly precious to you; lowly as may be your lot, you must humble yourselves in heart and mind, that he may exalt you; and however you may bend under the toils of your condition, you must be yet more weary with the burthen of your sins, if you would receive rest at the invitation of Jesus. — Remember too that every situation has its peculiar advantages, and its peculiar duties. Some of the advantages belonging to your condition you have already heard. It secures you from many temptations which the world strews thickly in the way of its votaries; and the labour of industry and the pressure of want may lead to a ready dependance on the Most High, and an entire acquiescence in his will. Do not then forget the duties which immediately arise out of your condition, those of contentment and submission to lawful authority; but reflect that to

murmur at your poverty, or to rise in resistance to those who are placed over you, is rebellion against the ordinances of God; to aim at levelling the ranks of society is to disturb that system beautiful for its order and harmony which He hath ordained. — Above all, remember that the good tidings which Jesus Christ has published are a call upon your gratitude; the gracious offer which he has made you demands your acceptance. If the Gospel had not sounded in your ears you would have been in the state which has been described to you, worshipping dumb idols, without the knowledge of a Saviour or the promise of pardon for your sins; nay, without any certain knowledge of God, or any sure hope of a future state. In this uncertainty, whither would you have looked for comfort in the hour of sorrow, of sickness, or of death? Now, the objects of faith and the rules of duty are revealed to you; you know in whom you believe and trust; the word of the true God himself is open to your eyes; above all, you are assured that you have a Saviour who has laid down his life for you, and is ready to carry you forward to the possession

of an eternal reward for your imperfect obedience. "Verily, I say unto you, many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." How would the sages of old, who were employed in seeking the first principles of religion, have rejoiced in the imperfect discovery of a few of those divine truths which are now displayed to the unlettered Christian! How would the patriarchs and devout Israelites have exulted, if, as Moses was permitted to view the promised land from Mount Pisgah, they had been so far indulged as to see before their death the finishing of the work of redemption, the birth and resurrection of that Saviour in whom they believed, and all the wonders which are recorded for your everlasting benefit!

Oh, then, my brethren, contemplate with delight the glorious tidings which have been announced to you. Be greatly thankful to Him who "hath made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Suffer not yourselves to be led astray by those who would seduce you with

lying words, to " forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew to yourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water." Receive with a firm faith the truths of the Gospel, and give up your hearts in love and confidence to its divine author. Then, " blessed be ye poor," for ye shall be safe under his guiding and protecting care. Then, whatever be your lot, be it hard and irksome, indigent and wretched, still you may rejoice in the midst of sorrow, and lift up your heads though you be humbled in the dust, " for your's is the kingdom of God."

SERMON XI.

The Man of Sorrows.

Matthew, xxvii. 46.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

It is perhaps unnecessary to inform any one who hears these words, that they were uttered by our Saviour, as he hung upon the cross; and that they are the same with which David opens the twenty-second Psalm. I have selected them for the text of this discourse, because they were the last, as well as the most vehement expression of grief, which, as it were, forced itself from the blessed Jesus: it being my intention to bring him before you at present as "a Man of Sorrows;" in other words, to

direct your attention to the sufferings of Christ, the reason of them, and the instruction to be derived from them.

This subject, though it is, no doubt, sung in heavenly strains by angels and glorified saints, does not affect the hearts of men as it ought to do. The events happened many ages past, and in a distant country: they do not seem to come home to us; to touch us nearly. Perhaps, the divine nature of the Sufferer, which may appear to render him superior to the common feelings of humanity, may tend to diminish our sense of the severity of his affliction. We are much more concerned at a trifling misfortune which may now befal one of our fellow-creatures, than at all the pain and anguish which the Son of God underwent for us. If we felt it as it deserves, is it possible we could indulge in those sins, the chastisement of which was laid upon him? If our hearts were thoroughly impressed with a sense of the immense debt which we owe him, could we ever cease to love him as our Saviour, and obey him as our Lord? But we do not think of it; it passes away; the world is

before us, and has the chief — I had almost said, the only place in our affections. — Let me now, at least in this holy place, from which worldly cares are excluded, and at this solemn hour, which is devoted to heavenly meditations, engage your attention, while I set before you the most remarkable afflictions, which were the lot of our blessed Saviour during his life, and particularly before his death.

However extraordinary it may appear that God should send his Son into the world to suffer and die, yet the Scripture teaches us, that such was the will of the Almighty from the beginning, and that his will was accomplished, when Jesus came amongst men. His sufferings are most clearly foretold in the Old Testament, and fully related in the New. There are three prophecies which deserve your particular attention. These are contained in the 22d and 69th Psalms, and in the 53d chapter of Isaiah. They are the more remarkable, both because their descriptions of Christ's sufferings are so minute as to appear more like historical narrations of

what is past, than predictions of future events; and on account of their concurrence in declaring the blessed and glorious consequences which should follow the humiliation of the Messiah. A short view of these portions of the word of prophecy may serve as an introduction to a fuller consideration of the subject.

In the 22d Psalm, David addresses himself to God in the character of the Messiah, speaking as if from the lowest depths of distress and misery; the most grievous part of which is the loss of God's protection, and of all the comforts of his presence. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" (*a*) Such was the language of the Son of God upon the cross; and the Psalmist, by opening his divine song with these remarkable words, seems to make it the complaint of Jesus, and not his own. Several of the verses which follow are literally descriptive of the desti-

(*a*) Psalm xxii. 1.

tute condition, and agonising torments of that holy victim. "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." (*a*) "The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (*b*) What is this but a description of his own sufferings given by the Saviour himself, and dictated by his Spirit to his servant David? — But now, after thus pathetically expressing his sorrows, the Messiah appears raised and exalted by the favour of the Almighty, and foretells the great and blessed effects which shall follow; namely, the conversion of the Gentiles, and the service to be paid by his own people: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I

(*a*) Psalm xxii. 6, 7, 8. (*b*) Psalm xxii. 16, 17, 18.

praise thee." (*a*) All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. A seed (*b*) shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come,

(*a*) Psalm xxii. 22.

(*b*) " My seed" — if we adopt the older translation which is in our Prayer books, following the LXX. and Vulgate, and indeed all the ancient versions, except the Syriac. This reading is approved by Bishop Horsley, who has however committed an oversight in quoting the authority of MSS.

" My seed" — " Christians are sons of God." Bishop Horsley. " Posteritas credentium adhærebit Domino." Munster in Pole's Synopsis. Dr. Hammond, after applying v. 29 and 30 to David, goes on to say, " In respect of Christ, the completion is more signal, that though he die, yet he should have a numerous posterity, and those begotten, as it were, by his blood-shedding; as Isaiah liii. 10., " when he hath made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed;" and " this seed of his shall serve him," viz. the multitude of Christians that adore the crucified Saviour, of whom it very agreeably follows, that " they shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation," being the men that make up the μελλων αιων, the future age (as Christianity is called) of which Christ is styled ὁ Πατηρ, the Father, in the LXXII. their rendering of Isaiah ix. 6." — But may we not more properly interpret this expression " my seed" of the family of David, — " the seed which the Lord hath blessed?" Isaiah, lxi. 9.; lxv. 23. Whether David or the Messiah be the speaker in this Psalm, " his seed which shall serve the Lord" is the believing part of the Jewish nation; and this it is which was appointed to declare the righteousness of God to the Gentiles.

and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born (*a*), that he hath done this." (*b*) — This is the object and reward of the Saviour's sufferings, that he might be " for a covenant to the people, and a light of the Gentiles;" that he might purchase to himself " a peculiar people," a " holy seed (*c*)," " a generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O God of Jacob." (*d*)

It is unnecessary to detain you with any farther remarks upon this prophecy. Let us proceed to the sixty-ninth Psalm, which is remarkable, though in a smaller degree than the twenty-second, for this circumstance, that the sufferings of Christ are not, as is perhaps the case in some instances, shadowed out by those of some other person; for many of the expressions here used are literally true of Jesus, and can only be

(*a*) " Born again of water and the Spirit. Begotten by the Word." Horsley. " Populus ex Deo natus Evangelio prædicato annunciabit justitiam Dei, quâ illos justificabit, vel quâ se justum ostendet præstando promissa." Vossius in Pole's Synopsis.

(*b*) Psalm xxii. 27. 30, 31. (*c*) Ezra, ix. 2. Isa. vi. 13.

(*d*) Psalm xxiv. 6.

figuratively applied by the Psalmist to his own situation. The Messiah here lays his complaint before the Father, as his deliverer and avenger: "For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me." (*a*) Afterwards he describes the bitter contumely and extreme sufferings which he endures, and the state of misery to which he is reduced, forsaken of his friends, insulted by his enemies: "Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour; mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; for comforters, but I found none. They gave me gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (*b*) — Then follow some prophetic

(*a*) Psalm lxix. 7, 8, 9. (*b*) Verse 19, 20, 21.

imprecations (*a*) of divine vengeance upon the impious and unbelieving Jews, descriptive of that spiritual blindness, and that heavy weight of calamity, which the just judgment of God has brought upon that unhappy nation for rejecting their King: "Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them,

(*a*) Si tamen hic imprecatio est, ac non potius vaticinium imprecandi formulâ conceptum, quo non malum optat, sed denuntiat quid iis videat futurum, quia merentur. Distinguendum omnino inter carnalem imprecationem ex vindictâ profectam, et propheticam maledictionem, quâ prophetæ a Dei Spiritu agitati loquuntur. Deus enim uti justo judicio impiis dira quæque immittit, ita minari quoque et prædicere illa potest. See Pole's Synopsis, Psalm v. 11.; and the argument to Psalm cix. Bishop Horsley's Introduction to the latter Psalm is nearly applicable to the 69th. "The first five verses of this Psalm clearly describe the treatment which our Lord met with from the Jews. The curses that follow, as clearly describe the judgments which have fallen upon that miserable people. So that the whole is a prediction of his sufferings, and of their punishment, delivered in the form of complaint and imprecation. Nor is there any thing in it, rightly understood, more offensive than in the prophetic curses of the Patriarchs." See the note at the end of this discourse.

and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents." (*a*) — This prediction of the lost and ruined state of his enemies leads the Messiah to praise and thanksgiving, the spiritual offerings of the Christian Church; which are more pleasing to God than all the bloody sacrifices which were enjoined of old. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving: this also shall please the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs." (*b*) — And the psalm concludes with a prophecy of a time yet perhaps to come, when all the world shall unite in praising God for the blessing of redemption, and his peculiar people shall once more "dwell in their own land (*c*):" "Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein: for God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

(*a*) Psalm lxix. 22, 23, 24, 25. — The two first of these verses are applied by St. Paul to the blinded state of the Israelites in his day. Rom. xi. 9, 10.

(*b*) Psalm lxix. 30, 31. (*c*) Jer. xxiii. 8.

The seed also of his servants shall inherit it; and they that love his name shall dwell therein." — Here you have a similar language to that at the close of the twenty-second psalm, foretelling perhaps a more advanced and more glorious state of the Church, which is the consequence and the reward of the grievous sufferings described in the former part of this psalm.

The third prophecy mentioned to you, and upon which I propose to dwell at greater length, is in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is so easy to be understood, and (I would hope) so familiar to your minds, that possibly any explanation or remarks upon it may appear unnecessary. Yet such is its extraordinary accuracy of description, such are its pathetic beauties, and above all so explicitly does it set forth some of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, that methinks the most intimate acquaintance with it should rather excite than abate attention. — In the midst of a course of prophecies of singular beauty and sublimity, which describe the glories of the Church of God; and almost immediately following

two, which paint in glowing colours the unceasing care of Jehovah for his people, and their prosperity in the latter days, stands this celebrated prediction; of a nature for the most part entirely different; setting forth the afflictions of an illustrious sufferer, in language as much calculated to soften by its pathetic simplicity, as the prophecies which precede it astonish by their lofty magnificence. Such are the varied beauties of this divine bard; so powerful is the Spirit of God, speaking by the mouth of his Prophet.

This is not the first occasion upon which the Servant of the Lord is introduced, whose sufferings are here described. His meek and gentle character had been beautifully drawn in the beginning of the forty-second chapter: "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." His sufferings likewise had been noticed in a short but very expressive sentence: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks

to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." (*a*) Yet such is said to be the favour of the Almighty to his Servant, and to the people to whom he is sent, that the gentleness of his disposition, and the afflictions which are to be his portion, are forgotten in the consideration of the great events which he is to accomplish. So that the Prophet, when he is about to enter upon a fuller description of the character and sorrows of this extraordinary Person, complains of the incredulity of his nation: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Is there any one who believes the report which we make of the Servant of the Lord? Is there any one, who sees and understands the power of God unto salvation in the atonement which he will make for the sins of men? The prophet then proceeds to set forth the poor and low condition, the uncomely appearance, and severe sufferings of this "Man of Sorrows;" the silent, unrepining submission with which they would be endured;

(*a*) Isaiah, l. 6.

the contempt with which he would be rejected by men. Yet, though thus despised and rejected, oppressed and afflicted, taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off out of the land of the living, it is foretold that he shall be with the rich in his death: by submitting to death he shall see his seed, shall prolong his days, and the gracious purpose (*a*) of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand; nay more, Jehovah shall give him the many for his portion, and the strong for his spoil. — Thus you have in this prophecy a faithful description of the appearance and character of this righteous Person: and a recital of his rejection by his countrymen, his sufferings, and death, as accurately detailed as if the Prophet had been the Historian. You have also the glories which should follow recorded nearly in the terms by which the Psalmist spoke of them. You see here, as well as in the Psalms which we have examined, a promise that He who is to suffer "shall see his seed," — a spiritual seed of holy worshippers, — a seed, more especially, of that people to

(*a*) Bp. Lowth's Translation.

whom the prophecy was addressed; of worshippers out of that nation by which he was at first despised and rejected: — "he shall prolong his days," — even for ever and ever: — and thus "the gracious purpose of Jehovah for the redemption and future happiness of mankind shall prosper in his hand." Nay more, "he shall divide the many for his portion, and the great for his spoil." "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto him, the forces of the Gentiles shall flow unto him (*a*)," "and he shall spoil principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and lead captivity captive." (*b*)

Thus has the Spirit of God instructed his Prophet to tell of the sorrows and triumphs of the Messiah. But the most remarkable circumstance in the prophecy yet remains to be noticed: — namely, the distinct and repeated mention of *the occasion* of Christ's sufferings. First, that they are inflicted by Jehovah himself. In the two Psalms which we have examined, the Messiah is represented as suffering by the

(*a*) Isaiah, lx. 5. (*b*) Col. ii. 15. Eph. iv. 8.

hands of men. The reproaches and revilings which are heaped upon him, the distress and agony under which he is ready to sink, the wounds which pierce his hands and feet, and the blasphemous cries which rend his soul, all are brought about by men: they are endured for the sake of God; and to Him the sufferer looks for support and deliverance. But in this prophecy of Isaiah, it is "the Lord" who "bruises him; who puts him to grief:" and though he is said to be "despised and rejected of men," yet they are (if I may use the expression) almost studiously kept out of view, and the Almighty is set before us as the Author of the afflictions which are laid upon his Servant. — Secondly, it is not for any fault of his own, but on account of the sins of others that he suffers. "He is wounded for *our* transgressions, he is bruised for *our* iniquities, the chastisement by which our peace is effected is upon him, and with his stripes we are healed: all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." His triumph after death is likewise

attributed to his suffering for the sins of others: "because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." — Let us now put together these two circumstances which are stated as the occasion of his sufferings and death, and what is the result?—"God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."(*a*) Jehovah sends his Servant: — and that, a "righteous servant," his "elect, in whom his soul delighteth;" — sends him to bring forth judgment unto victory, to "raise up the tribes of Jacob, to restore the preserved of Israel, to be a light to the Gentiles, and salvation unto the ends of the earth." This divine messenger, sent on so important an office, is "stricken and smitten of God;" "for the transgression of his people he is stricken;" he is "brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" "his soul is made an offering for sin." — Here then, my brethren, you have before you "the Lamb of God which

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 21.

taketh away the sins of the world;" you have the great doctrines of the sacrifice of Christ and the atonement by his death, plainly, fully, powerfully preached by the prophet Isaiah. Well might he be called the Evangelical Prophet, since it pleased God by his mouth to instruct his people in the great mysteries of the Gospel. This was indeed "a light," a glorious light,— "shining in a dark place;" yet with such a lustre as to illuminate the most benighted ignorance, to flash conviction on the most stubborn unbelief. When I contemplate the mysteries of redemption thus laid open, the veil removed which hid from the eyes of former generations the things to come; when I see Jehovah calling this illustrious Person, investing him with his high commission, upholding him with the arm of Almighty power, and encouraging him with the promise of never-failing support;— when, again, I see Him smiting this his righteous servant, Himself leading him as a lamb to the sacrifice, and laying upon him the iniquities of all his creatures:— when I consider the meekness and gentleness, the innocence and patience, the griev-

ous sorrows and violent death of this holy victim; — when I view him accomplishing by his very sufferings the gracious purpose of Jehovah, triumphing not by the slaughter of his enemies, but by his own death, and carried forward to glory by the same hand which had bruised him and put him to grief; — when I view the arm of the Lord revealed, and his power displayed, no less in the humiliation than in the exaltation of his servant; — when I consider all these things thus distinctly foretold, I am lost in wonder both at their extraordinary nature, and at their accurate accomplishment; the whole scheme of salvation seems to pass before my eyes; I adore with the lowest humility the wisdom which contrived and the power which executed this great work by means so much beyond our comprehension; — the goodness which graciously revealed this vast, this astonishing scheme to his people, and hath left this prophecy as a standing memorial to all succeeding generations, a confirmation of the faith of believers to the end of the world.

These three passages of Scripture hav-

ing been laid open to you, which contain the most remarkable predictions of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which was to follow, I do not feel it necessary to enter upon any other prophecies (*a*) relating to the same object. That these abound in the Old Testament we are assured by the highest authority. The sufferings and death of the Messiah have been the stumbling-block of both Jews and Gentiles. And it was partly perhaps to prepare their minds for these extraordinary events, and to remove the unhappy prejudice after the events had taken place, that the Almighty saw fit to scatter through the volume of prophecy many predictions, some plainer, some more obscure; and to raise up many types and emblems; all teaching the same doctrine, namely, that Christ must suffer, and by suffering enter into his glory. Immediately therefore upon his resurrection we find him explaining first to the two disciples at Emmaus, and then to the eleven apostles, how it was "written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in

(*a*) See Bishop Hall on the Passion.

the Psalms," that Christ must suffer. (*a*) And St. Paul reasoned with the Jews at Thessalonica "out of the Scriptures," opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered. (*b*) Thus both Jesus and his apostles laboured by means of the Scriptures which were in their hands to "open the understandings" of the Jews, to take away the scandal of the cross, and remove those false glories with which their carnal imagination had invested the Messiah at his first appearance. We, my brethren, have not so learned Christ. That cross, which was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," is to us a demonstration of "the power of God and the wisdom of God (*c*)," our glory (*d*) and our joy. And those grievous afflictions which were his portion almost from his manger at Bethlehem till he was lifted up at Golgotha, kindle in our hearts the warmest gratitude and devotion, and instruct us to "suffer with him" that we may "also reign with him (*e*),"

(*a*) Luke, xxiv. 26, 27. 44, 45, 46. (*b*) Acts, xvii. 2, 3.
(*c*) 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. (*d*) Gal. vi. 14. (*e*) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." (*a*) Having then seen how "the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets testified his sufferings beforehand (*b*)," our next object will be to enquire how the same Spirit has recorded those sufferings by the pen of the Evangelists.

(*a*) Phil. iii. 8. (*b*) 1 Pet. i. 11.

NOTE TO SERMON XI.

THESE imprecations against the enemies of God have given offence to many pious persons, and Bishop Horne conceiving them to have a predictive import, renders the verbs in the future tense. Such a construction seems manifestly improper where the word is in the imperative. The following considerations may perhaps shew that it is always unnecessary, and may tend to remove the offence which has arisen from a misinterpretation of these passages.

I. The predictions delivered by the Patriarchs before their death, descriptive of the fortunes of their posterity, were frequently pronounced in the form of blessings and curses: "Cursed be Canaan." — "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil bless the lads," &c. The blessings pronounced by Moses (Deut. xxxiii.) are almost all in the imperative.

II. This mood is used by the prophets to predict future events: "Rejoice ye nations with his people," *i. e.* the Gentiles shall rejoice with Israel. "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem." So the woes denounced by the prophet Isa. v. xxviii. xxix. xxx. "Howl, O Heshbon," Jer. xlix. 3., &c.

This use of the imperative may perhaps serve to explain such passages as Isa. vi. 9. "Hear ye indeed, but understand not," &c.

III. These curses are chiefly to be found in the 69th and 109th Psalms. And in these they are clearly prophetical, being quoted by the apostles. It is reasonable therefore to explain in the same manner similar passages, which may occur elsewhere.

IV. In these Psalms the Messiah is the speaker, a consideration which should at least induce us to treat them with reverence.

SERMON XII.

The Man of Sorrows.

Matt. xxvii, 46.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The most extraordinary character in which the Son of God is represented to us is that of a Man of Sorrows. The low situation and grievous sufferings of the Messiah were to the Jews a stumbling-block, which occasioned the fall of many in Israel. Their national pride, their vanity in considering themselves the peculiar people of God, the hopes which they had encouraged, the wrong interpretations which they had put upon the prophecies, and above all, a fondness for worldly splendour,

— these made them look with disdain on the poor, the lowly, the despised, the sorrowful Jesus. And even to our eyes, better instructed as we are, and more free from prejudice, it may seem an unworthy task in one of the Persons of the Godhead to come upon earth, and there suffer and die. But this is only because we view the subject with the eyes of a carnal mind. The ways of God are not as our ways: his glory is not increased by earthly magnificence, nor his essential happiness diminished by worldly suffering. In his wisdom and his goodness he decreed that his Son should suffer for sinners; and this character of "a Man of Sorrows," as it is the most extraordinary, so it is the most interesting and important in which we can view him. It has therefore been carefully laid open to us, both in the Old Testament and in the New: the former foretelling those things which are distinctly related in the latter.

In a former discourse I went into the subject of the Prophecies relating to the sufferings of Christ, and examined three of them particularly. These are the 22d and

69th Psalms, and the 53d chapter of Isaiah. In these you are struck with the very accurate description which was given many ages before of that which was fulfilled in Jesus. You appear to have him before your eyes in such a manner that the language of these prophets can only be spoken of him. You see him not only described generally, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised and rejected of men; but led to the slaughter, pierced in his hands and feet, and cut off out of the land of the living; you see the gall and vinegar given him to drink; you hear the blasphemous insults of the Jews, as they stand staring and looking upon him; you hear his last grievous cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" All these circumstances never met in any other individual; and particularly, this last cry could never be uttered by any other in the sense in which Jesus uttered it; as you may perhaps be assured, if you give me your attention to the end of this discourse. Indeed, the most remarkable circumstance in these prophecies, especially in the last of them, is not the exact description of the

character, or behaviour, or sufferings of Jesus; it is, that the reason of them is so fully laid open, that the peculiar feature in his sufferings should have been so clearly foretold; viz. the hand of the Father manifested in his griefs, and leading him to death; laying on him the iniquities of us all. This was the peculiar, the distinguishing circumstance in Christ's passion; this was, as we have seen, distinctly predicted; and the predictions we shall find in this, and in every instance, most remarkably verified, if we proceed to the melancholy history of his sufferings and death.

Here let me request you to trace in your thoughts the whole life of the blessed Jesus. Recollect the place in which he was laid at his birth, as an instance of his low and destitute condition. Consider that while he was yet an infant, his parents were forced to fly with him into Egypt, in order to escape the massacre at Bethlehem; and on their return to dwell in Nazareth, which gained him the odious appellation of a Nazarene, and the scorn

and contempt of his countrymen. After he had entered upon his ministry, what did he not suffer! Remember the vast labours and privations which he underwent, his long and painful journies, his neglect of bodily food, and want of a place of rest: how he was several times obliged to escape miraculously from a violent death: how he endured the slowness and unbelief of his followers, and even of his brethren; the ridicule and contempt of the Scribes and Pharisees; and the ingratitude and infidelity of the multitude, who followed him to be fed with bread, or to be healed of their diseases, not to hear the word of salvation.

All these instances of distress and misery are familiar to every one who is acquainted with the writings of the evangelists; and each perhaps will be able to mention some touching scene, some affecting expression of grief, or some barbarous outrage, which has moved his pity, or awakened his indignation, as he perused the simple narratives of the Gospel historians. Let me recommend you to contemplate them in the highest point of view, as having been

pre-ordained and appointed by God. I know not that your compassion for the sufferer, or your horror at the contempt and the violence which he endured, will be in any degree abated: but your thoughts will be elevated, and your views enlarged; and a peculiar character of awe and solemnity will be given to your feelings, suitable to your great and holy meditations. When you see the Son of God feeding the multitude by his word, and contributing to the mirth of a marriage-feast, yet content to undergo all the wants and privations of a life of poverty; now escaping by a miracle from the hands of his enemies, and then calmly submitting to reproach and violence; speaking peace to the winds and waves, and compelling Death and Hell to yield subjection to his word, yet exercising no undue influence on the hearts of men; — when, in short, you behold an almighty power exerting itself on particular occasions; and again, as it were, reposing in silence; — you will be convinced, not merely that he was more than one of the sons of men, but that he was acting under the guidance of the di-

vine will, and in strict conformity with the everlasting counsel of God: you will perceive the hand of the Father directing the circumstances of his life, no less than of his death: you will adore that wonderful dispensation, by which the actions of men, free and uncontrouled, effected that which the Almighty had decreed (*a*): and you will view the great work of atonement going forward during all the days of sorrow that Jesus lived upon earth, till he pronounced it to be "finished" as he bowed his head upon the cross.

But though he was through life "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," yet it was just before his death that the heaviest weight of affliction was laid upon him:—affliction which he foresaw, and "steadfastly set his face"(*b*) to bear; nay, which he encountered with a readiness and alacrity that amazed (*c*), and alarmed his followers. Let me entreat your earnest attention to the feeble attempt which I would make to set

(*a*) See Matt. xvi. 21. Acts, ii. 23. iv. 28; and Bishop Horsley's Sermon on the first of these texts.

(*b*) Luke, ix. 51. (*c*) Mark, x. 32. See Luke, xix. 28.

before you the dreadful pain of body and mind, endured by the Son of God.

He had been eating the Passover with his disciples, had instituted the Sacrament which has since been called the Lord's Supper, and, after a most affectionate and consoling discourse, had recommended them and himself to his heavenly Father. Going, as was his custom, into the garden of Gethsemane, and knowing that the time was now come that he should be delivered into the hand of his enemies, and be put to death, he retired a short distance from the three disciples whom he had chosen to attend him; and kneeling down prayed most earnestly and repeatedly that the cup of affliction of which he was about to drink might pass from him. At the same time he devoutly resigned himself to the will of his Father; being prepared to suffer that will, as through life he had steadily performed it. The anguish of his mind was so great as to throw him into an agony; so that though he was on the cold ground his sweat fell from him like great drops of blood; "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," oppressed with horror

and amazement (*a*), and sinking under a total subjection of spirits, so that an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him. How heavy must have been the sorrow, which weighed down the soul of the blessed Jesus at that hour of darkness! He saw the pains and torments which awaited him: he had before his eyes the thorns and the scourge and the nails. But more, far more than this, probably: he looked beyond all the sufferings of that hour, beyond all that he was himself to endure. He knew, that on him were laid the sins of all mankind, and that his blood was now to be shed to wash

(*a*) 'The Evangelists have in such language expressed his agony, as cannot but raise in us the highest admiration at the bitterness of that passion. He began to be sorrowful, saith St. Matthew; he began to be sore amazed, saith St. Mark; and to be very heavy, say both: and yet these words in our translation come far short of the original expression, which render him suddenly, upon a present and immediate apprehension, possessed with fear, horror, and amazement, encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow, pressed down with consternation and dejection of mind, tormented with anxiety and disquietude of spirit.'—*Bishop Pearson on the Creed*, art. *Suffered*. See his note.

From these expressions of horror and amazement, coupled with those which imply excessive grief, one is led to suppose that their must have been something supernatural in the cause which produced such violent effects in one capable of enduring so much.

them away: but he knew how many there were for whom that blood would be shed in vain; that his own nation would reject him, and that thousands in all ages would refuse the salvation offered them: — would by their sins crucify him afresh, and put him and his gospel to an open shame. — Consider now, my brethren, the perfect knowledge which the Son of God possessed of the destructive nature of sin; consider the quick and lively sense which he entertained of the Father's love, and his earnest desire to promote His glory; consider with what holy abhorrence his pure soul would contemplate a wilful indulgence in sin, heightened by the black stain of ingratitude for all the rich mercies of redemption; — and you will perhaps comprehend some portion at least of that agonizing grief and consternation, which almost overwhelmed the mind of the meek and innocent Jesus. 'If the true contrition of one single sinner, bleeding under the sting of the law only for his own iniquities, all which notwithstanding he knoweth not, cannot be performed without great bitterness of sorrow and remorse; what bounds can we

set unto that grief, what measures to that anguish, which proceedeth from a full apprehension of all the transgressions of so many millions of sinners?' (*a*) — Nor must we omit to mention that the Father's hand was then heavy upon this Son of his love; that He was about to lay upon this innocent victim the iniquities of all men; and how lively was his apprehension of the Father's wrath, how fearful his dread of it, it is impossible for man, earthly, sinful man, to conceive or express. — After all, 'what the feelings of the Son of God were in that hour, it is dangerous to define: we know them not; we may be too bold to determine of them. To very good purpose it was that the ancient Fathers of the Greek Church in their Liturgy, after they have recounted all the particular pains as set down in his Passion, and by all and every one of them called for mercy, shut up all with this, 'By thine unknown sorrows and sufferings, felt by thee, but not distinctly known by us, have mercy upon us, and save us.' (*b*)

(*a*) Bishop Pearson on the Creed.
(*b*) Bishop Andrewes's 2d Sermon of the Passion.

Rising from prayer, and strengthened by aid from above, Jesus went forth with calmness and dignity to meet the armed multitude which was coming to apprehend him. But how afflicting must it have been to see at the head of this party the traitor Judas, who had been one of his constant companions, and even chosen to be an apostle! How afflicting to be forsaken by all his disciples, and openly denied by Peter who had a few hours before professed his readiness to follow his Master to prison and to death! The weakness and ingratitude of his chosen friends and companions were bitter ingredients in that cup "in the hand of the Lord full mixed," which he was then pouring out on the head of his devoted Servant, even to the very dregs.

Being placed before the Sanhedrim, or chief council of the Jews, what insults, what mockery did he not undergo! even before he had, in answer to the solemn adjuration of the High Priest, declared himself the Son of God with power, and claimed the right hand of the Majesty on high, and the judgment-seat of heaven, as of right

belonging to him. Then indeed he was spit upon, buffeted, and blasphemed. — He is next carried before Pilate the Roman Governor who, wishing to rid himself of a disagreeable and perplexing business, sends him to Herod the king. There he is set at nought, and mocked, and arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and sent again to Pilate. Pilate examines and scourges him, in the hope that a slight punishment would satisfy his accusers. But nothing less than the blood of him whom they were hunting (*a*) down to death could appease their malice; and after being vehemently and falsely accused; after being scourged and smitten on the head, and crowned with thorns; after seeing a man who was a robber and murderer preferred before him; after hearing his blood in derision called down upon the head of the people — that blood, which was about to be shed for them and for all men; — he is given up to his enemies, amidst clamour and tumult, the governor (*b*),

(*a*) See Psalm xxii. 16; and the Title of this Psalm.

(*b*) There is no need to aggravate the offence of Pilate by making him a judge, instead of governor or procurator. In this respect he seems to have had rather hard measure dealt

even while he confirmed the sentence of the council, declaring the innocence of his prisoner, and is led away to be crucified.

And now we approach the last sad scene of darkness, when the blessed Jesus was nailed to the cross ; and there, as he hung in torments for several hours, was mocked and derided by his persecutors, and (Oh blind infatuation ! Oh inhuman malice ! Oh horrible profanation and hardness of heart !) his very miracles of mercy cast in his teeth. I do not mean to work upon your feelings by an attempt to paint the horrors of that day ; especially as the sufferings of the Son

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him. Jesus underwent a trial before the Sanhedrim, the event of which was that all the council decreed him to be guilty of death. He was then brought before Pilate to have the sentence confirmed and carried into execution ; the Jews having lost the power of inflicting capital punishment. It does not appear that the chief priests thought of offering any evidence ; but contented themselves with saying that they had brought a malefactor, and demanding justice. The governor makes such enquiries as satisfy him of the innocence of Jesus, but does not choose to go the length of releasing him by his own power. Pilate was no doubt greatly guilty ; and his character, which was one of great profligacy and cruelty, does not dispose us to extenuate his crime. Otherwise, it might be argued, that it would have been a great stretch of power, if he had refused to carry into execution a sentence passed by the supreme court of judicature.

of God then, as in the garden, were such as not only no pen can describe, but no mind can comprehend. I hasten to the last expression of grief which was uttered by our Saviour shortly before he expired, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This terrible cry of extreme anguish may be said to be the height and completion of the sufferings of Jesus. In all his other pains and torments, dreadful as they were, and inflicted by the hand of the Father, yet He was present to give strength and consolation under them. But that support was now withdrawn. And great must have been the sense which Christ entertained of this loss, when none but himself could truly understand the excellence of the Father's presence, or truly enjoy the delight of intimate communion with him!

What, now, (if it be not presumptuous to enquire,) was the cause, that at that time the Son of God was thus oppressed with the bitterest sorrow? Could it be that the Serpent was then permitted to exercise extraordinary power against the Seed of the Woman? Was it, that during that awful

darkness which for three hours overhung the land, the light of the Father's love was withdrawn from his Son; and he was left destitute and forsaken, without one ray of comfort to cheer his soul, or dispel the preternatural gloom which the powers of darkness spread over it? To affirm any thing on so mysterious a subject, were arrogance, if not impiety. Yet I observe that previous to this miraculous darkness the mind of the blessed Jesus was calm and composed. His prayer for his murderers, his promise of paradise to the penitent thief, and his recommending of his mother to the care of the beloved disciple, were striking instances of that serenity of mind, that disregard for his own sufferings, and tender compassion for the distress of others, which were conspicuous features in his character. After uttering this remarkable cry likewise, we find him, though under increasing torments of body, possessing the same self-command, the same piety, and calm resignation. May we not then suppose it to have been fore-ordained, that at that awful hour of the consummation of man's redemption, when the great sacrifice was offering, and

the Lamb of God was bleeding upon the altar, the Holy Victim should be afflicted with torments unknown before? That (however he might suffer during his agony in the garden from his perfect fore-knowledge of all which he was to endure) it was now more especially that "the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all?" That since he was to bear our sins and the punishment of them, it was necessary that he should endure that which is the heaviest of all punishments, the loss of God's favour? May we not suppose that as it was upon the cross that he was to "blot out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us (*a*)," and "deliver us from the curse of the law (*b*)," it was necessary that he should undergo the penalty of the law in its utmost severity? That as it was there (*c*) that he was to triumph over principalites and powers, it was necessary that he should be assailed by them with all the force which they could oppose to his weakness? Perhaps, then, the darkness which obscured the mid-day sun was an emblem of the distress

(*a*) Col. ii. 14. (*b*) Gal. iii. 13. (*c*) Col. ii. 15.

under which the Sun of Righteousness then laboured while he was struggling against the prince of this world, and bowed down beneath the weight of sin and the sense of God's displeasure. And surely, terrible was that conflict, to which Satan "came down in great wrath, knowing that he had but a short time (*a*);" and heavy was the load of the sins of the whole world; and keen the arrows of the Father's wrath, sharper than the thorns or the nails, and piercing even through the soul (*b*), till he burst into that strange and bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast THOU forsaken me?" — The burden is supported, the victory is accomplished, the darkness is removed. Pious resignation and tranquillity succeed. For the purpose of fulfilling a prophecy even to the very letter, the Sufferer complains of thirst; and then solemnly declaring the great work for which he came into the world to be now accomplished, he commends his spirit into the hands of his Father; and breathes it forth with a loud cry (*c*), amidst the quaking of the earth, the

(*a*) Rev. xii. 12. (*b*) Luke, ii. 35.

(*c*) It was this loud cry, which so much astonished the

rending of rocks, the opening of the graves, and the tearing asunder of the veil in the Temple: all nature being convulsed, when He who "sustaineth all things" bows his head; and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers, when reconciliation is made with God by the death of his Son.

I have brought together all these circumstances in a simple narrative, unadorned, and unexaggerated, that you may see in one view the chief sufferings which your Saviour bare on your account; and that being deeply contemplated, they may make a lasting impression on your minds. If a small part only of this catalogue of sorrows

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Centurion, and is a strong argument in favour of the idea that Jesus expired by his own act; neither worn out by pain, nor exhausted by loss of blood, but laying down his life of himself, as he had expressly declared that he had power to do. I mention this for the sake of requesting my readers to consider the hand of God in the atonement made by Christ. The agency of men was necessarily employed to effect the divine purposes; to do (if I may be allowed the expression) the inferior parts of the work. But they had no hand in producing those peculiar sufferings, or that death, whereby the atonement was made. Those sufferings were inflicted by the Father: that death was a voluntary sacrifice of himself by Christ.

had fallen to the lot of a friend or a neighbour, how grieved, or how indignant would you be at the thought of it? Nay, if a person whose name was unknown to you were put to death for a crime of which he was clearly innocent, you would be almost ready to demand the blood of the person who caused his death. Yet here is a just man, who had spent his life in performing acts of kindness, in healing the sick, and teaching the ignorant, barbarously dragged to execution, and cruelty and insult heaped upon him beyond measure. A just man, did I say? As man indeed he suffered. But he was more than man, even the best of men: he was the Son of God, who stooped for a while from heaven to earth, that he might deliver us from the power of the evil one. And the sufferings which he underwent were more than man can endure. Yet they were willingly borne for the sake of his creatures; — of creatures at enmity with him. What a miracle of mercy is here! and what hearts must we have, if we can view it unmoved, or turn from it with carelessness and indifference, as from a common spectacle! Hear

the words of the prophet speaking as by the mouth of Jesus; "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (*a*) If then you can feel for the pain which he endured on your account, turn and behold him. If you can feel for yourselves, and desire to partake of the blessings which he has purchased for you, behold him with the eye of faith, and constantly carry about you the knowledge of Christ, and of those sufferings which are the seal of your pardon, and the foundation of your acceptance with God.

Having set before you the blessed Jesus as "a Man of Sorrows," it remains to point out the reason of those sorrows, and the instruction which may be derived from them.

(*a*) Lam. i. 12.

SERMON XIII.

The Man of Sorrows.

Matt. xxvii. 46.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

From these words I have taken occasion in two discourses to direct your attention to the Saviour of the world in respect of his sufferings; and have shewn you how distinctly they were foretold by the prophets, and how fully that which had been predicted was accomplished in Him. Some remarks have also been made as we proceeded, to point out the nature and cause of them. This is the third part of the subject, in which I am to shew you the reason of Christ's sufferings, and the practical lessons which they teach us.

Why was our Lord a man of Sorrows? — Our answer to this question may perhaps be properly divided into two parts; as it respects those afflictions which were more particularly laid upon him by the Father immediately before his death; and as it relates to his situation in life, and the wants and calamities that were connected with it. This distinction, if not strictly just, is at least very instructive, since in the former view he appears as the great Sacrifice for sin, in the latter he is brought before us as our Pattern and Example.

First, then, the heaviest of afflictions were endured by him as a Sacrifice for sin. "Christ hath once suffered for sins," saith St. Peter, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (*a*) He who was eminently the Just one, who was wholly without sin, was "by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God (*b*)" made a sacrifice for the sins of men; an all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It is not my intention to enter at any length

(*a*) 1 Peter, iii. 18. (*b*) Acts, ii. 23.

upon the doctrine of the atonement. (*a*) I would at present turn your thoughts to reflect what severe sufferings were laid upon the blessed Jesus on account of sin; and how evil must be the nature, and how heinous the guilt of that enmity against God, which could only be removed and pardoned by such unheard of torments endured by his Son. To the mind which is so endued with grace as to view things in their true light, this will appear a most awful and affecting consideration. A spirit of piety feels and laments the dark and evil nature of sin; its absence from the source of all good; its present vileness, and its future punishment. The penitent and contrite soul, which is deeply humbled at the recollection of former offences, which has felt "the arrows of the Lord sticking fast in it, and his hand pressing it sore," which turns to the Lord with weeping and mourning, with a deep conviction that in his favour is life, and a dread of everlasting banishment from the source of all joy — a soul so chastened and subdued will acknowledge that a

(*a*) See Sermon xiii. vol. ii. on The Lamb of God.

state of wickedness is a state of darkness and horror, that the weight of sin is grievous, and the burthen of it is intolerable, that the evil one is full of art and malice, his temptations are strong, and the combat is difficult. Every penitent and every pious heart therefore will know and feel how much is to be done, and how much is to be endured, before the power of the evil one can be broken, and "the body of sin destroyed." When the iniquities of all men, then, were laid upon the head of one victim, how sharp must have been the trial! how severe the agony! Such indeed we know it to have been; more severe than human strength can endure, more severe than the human mind can conceive. And why cannot we conceive it? Why cannot we entertain at least some faint notion of it? Surely, because our understandings, our faculties, our feelings, our whole nature, are debased by sin: our judgment is perverted, our hearts are hardened. If it were not so, could our eyes be so easily taken off from the contemplation of this spectacle? Could our attention be disengaged by every trivial matter from studying the mercy of God in

Christ Jesus? Could our feelings be awake to every sensual pleasure — alive to every worldly sorrow, — but cold and dead towards our highest Friend, our heavenly Benefactor?

Consider, I entreat you, how much is implied, when we say that Christ suffered for the sins of the world. What is meant by this? That he suffered such a punishment as the sins of all mankind deserved: such a punishment at least, as the Father would see fit to accept as a satisfaction for those great and multiplied transgressions. Wherein, now, consists the *guilt* of sin? That it is rebellion against the Most High; ingratitude for his mercies; disregard of his judgments; preferring his enemies before him. Wherein consists the *evil* of sin? That it is the loss of God's favour; absence from the Author of all good: that it exposes us to His wrath who is a jealous God, able to destroy both soul and body in hell. To a mind which is not vitiated and depraved by indulgence in wickedness, a simple statement of the nature and evil of sin is sufficient to excite the deepest abhorrence and dread of it.

If we proceed to enquire what were the sins of the whole world for which satisfaction was made by the blessed Jesus, who can recount them? Who can tell their number, their aggravations, their enormity? Who can express the corruptions of the Jews, the depravity and idolatry of the Gentiles, the perverse iniquities and carelessness of those who call themselves Christians? Who can recite the laws which have been broken, the calls to repentance which have been disregarded, the outward means of grace which have been neglected or abused, the inward motions of the Spirit against which the heart has been hardened?

All sin, however aggravated, however multiplied, was laid upon the Saviour Christ. His meek spirit was bowed down under its weight. He who best understands the joys of God's presence was deprived of those joys. He who alone can truly feel the Father's love was exposed to his wrath. He who is pure from all spot of sin was made to feel the shame and horror of sin, and exposed to the malice of his bitterest enemies.

And by whom was this burthen imposed? By the Father himself. He gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. He laid on his beloved and only begotten Son the iniquities of us all. For the sake of his sinful creatures he was willing for a time to turn away his face from him in whom he is well pleased, to lead him like a lamb to the slaughter, to bruise him, and put him to grief.—This is a point which, as it seems to me, is not sufficiently considered. We are apt to look at too low a cause of the Saviour's sufferings. We accuse the priests and the people, the treacherous Judas, the sanguinary Caiaphas, or the time-serving Pilate. But each of these, however atrocious might be his guilt, was only an instrument (*a*) in the hand of God to perform

(*a*) The advice given by Caiaphas in the council, that "it was expedient that one man should die for the people," which occasioned the final resolution to put Jesus to death, was a suggestion of the Spirit of God. See John, xi. 51. It is most awful to reflect that a man may be doing the work of God while he is executing his own atrocious plans; and that the Almighty will make use of the wickedness of men to bring about his gracious designs. Yet let us not say that He is the cause of their wickedness. The providence of God ordained that Jesus should die; and his Spirit put those words into the mouth of the high priest which brought about his death.

His mighty work. — So again, we do not take a just view of the sufferings themselves. We dwell upon what he endured in his body, and his painful death; or upon the treachery and desertion of his friends, and the insults and reproaches heaped upon him by his enemies. And no doubt in these respects there never was sorrow like unto his sorrow. But these formed the smallest part of Christ's affliction. The hand of the Father was heavy upon him and weighed down his gentle spirit. — This is the light in which I have already presented the subject to you. I repeat it now in order to point out the evil consequence which arises from such low and imperfect views. By confining our thoughts as it were to earth, and to the bodily pains en-

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But Caiaphas acted only with a wicked design and a worldly motive. He shut his eyes against the light, and hardened his heart against repentance. But he might have seen, and repented, and believed, and have become a martyr instead of being a murderer. I mention this the rather, because this passage may easily be made to favour the horrible Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation. The Spirit of God has sometimes operated *in an extraordinary manner* upon the minds of wicked men without producing a change of heart. Such was the gift of prophecy to Balaam.

dured by Christ, are we not in danger of bringing him and his sufferings on a level with saints and martyrs? and of forgetting the original cause of his sorrows, — the displeasure of God against sin? of discharging our indignation upon those wicked men who were the immediate occasion of his death, instead of accusing ourselves (*a*) and our own wickedness? But let us once accustom ourselves to look at Jesus as a sin-offering, sacrificed to appease the Father's wrath, suffering under His hand, and bearing the punishment of our iniquities, and how exalted and enlarged do our conceptions become! How great and terrible appears the wrath of God! How infinite his goodness in freely giving his Son! How tender the love, how keen the sufferings, how immoveable the constancy and patience of Jesus! What a deep conviction do we acquire of the foulness and deformity of sin! What an humbling sense of our own unworthiness!

This is the point to which I would bring

(*a*) See Bishop Andrewes's Sermons on the Passion, particularly the first, where the important doctrine that WE are they who pierced the Messiah is well insisted on.

you; namely, a just perception and deeply rooted conviction of the evil nature and consequences of enmity against God; and a holy abhorrence of those iniquities which provoke his displeasure. In the affliction which was laid upon his beloved Son you see the punishment reserved for the wicked: — darkness and horror unspeakable; exquisite pain and misery; and the agonising sense of the loss of God's favour, and of being wholly abandoned by Him in whose presence is life and joy. And can you, my brethren, think of these things without terror? Have you the courage to awaken the wrath of the Most High? Are you prepared to pass an eternity of hopeless, ceaseless misery? Reflect, I beseech you, that since Christ hath suffered for sins your guilt is increased tenfold, if you do not permit him to "bring you to God." You sin against knowledge, against grace, against every powerful and every affecting motive. You not only dare the vengeance of a jealous God, but you are ungrateful for the rich mercies of a gracious Father and Benefactor.

Suffer me to press this last consideration

upon your minds with all the earnest solicitude of one who is an "ambassador for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." "Greater love," said Jesus to his disciples, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (*a*) Let us for a moment suppose him addressing us from the cross: will not his language be the same? Behold, we may imagine him to say, behold and see these my sufferings. They are undergone on your account. And willingly I bear them: most willingly I shed my blood and endure the Father's wrath for you. Ye were my enemies: your sins have brought me to this pain and sorrow. But let me call you friends: ye will be my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Consider what love I bear you — love, stronger than death — love, which can overcome all fear of reproach, and pain, and torment. And may I not obtain from you the small return of gratitude and obedience? Are vanity and wickedness so endeared to you, as to

(*a*) John, xv. 13, 14.

render my sufferings of no effect? Will ye throw away the pardon which I have procured at the expense of my own blood? Will ye turn away with a careless eye and a hardened heart, and disregard the heavenly mercy which opens its arms wide to receive you?

What a call is here, my beloved brethren, to forsake those sins which brought the Son of God to shame and misery! Think of all the sufferings which he endured; and let the conscience of every sinner apply to himself the awful language of the prophet Nathan, "Thou art the man," whose iniquities have wounded and pierced thy Saviour; for thy sake he was exposed to reproach and remorseless cruelty: and wilt thou crucify him afresh? wilt thou put him again to open shame?—Oh, let the thought of those sorrows, such as none but the Son of God could have endured, awaken in our souls every tender, every virtuous, every devout affection. These are surely the best feelings of our nature, directed to the sublimest object. Why should we shew compassion to the meanest of God's creatures, and take delight in contemplating

those small instances of virtuous love, or heroic self-devotion, which the world presents to us, or the page of history records, yet feel little pity, and little admiration for Him who sanctified, and gave himself for us? Why should we accuse ourselves of ingratitude, if we have neglected to acknowledge a favour from the hands of one of our fellow-creatures, yet repay the infinite mercies of OUR SAVIOUR, with profaneness and insult?—At the thought of the cross, and of Him who bowed his head upon it, let every proud imagination, every unholy desire, die within us; and let that heavenly love, that meek submission, that patient endurance, that resistance of all the powers of darkness, which were so conspicuous there, be henceforth the brightest ornaments in the character of his disciples.

II. We must now pass to the other part of our subject, less sublime and affecting, indeed, but scarcely less useful or important. Why, it is asked, did Christ lead a life of suffering? If it was ordained in the divine counsels that he should undergo the penalty

of sin, why should his death be preceded by a life of want and misery?

I have already stated, that this distinction, which separates the sorrows which were his portion while he lived in the world from those which the Father laid upon Him immediately before his death, is made rather for the sake of convenience than in strict propriety. Our view of this great subject will be incorrect, if we do not look upon the whole of his existence upon earth, from the cradle to the cross, as forming part of the mighty work of atonement, for which he came into the world. When it is thus considered, the reason of his poor and wretched condition immediately appears. He was, while upon earth, the representative of sinners: how then could he be otherwise than "a man of sorrows?" He was made sin for us: and how could he fail to be "acquainted with grief?" What have sinners to do with happiness? It was forfeited with their innocence. Christ would not have borne the whole of sin, if he had not endured the whole of its punishment. "Being made a curse for us," he suffered in the highest and severest

degree every thing which we deserve to suffer.(*a*) Have we exposed ourselves to the arts and malice of the evil one? "Jesus was led of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil."—Have we deserved hunger and thirst, weariness and poverty? Jesus wandered about poor and in distress, "not having where to lay his head."—Have we deserved reproach and ignominy? "He was despised and rejected of men," and reviled as "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

Here then, brethren, you have the true reason why the Son of God consented not only to become man, but to be "a man of sorrows." Therefore it was, that he appeared as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he had no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that men should desire him; nay, he was such that they hid their faces from him, despised, and slightly esteemed him.—And shall not this, like every other part of our subject, shew us the vileness and deformity of sin? What is it that has overhung with mists

(*a*) See Bishop Beveridge's Sermon on John, xix. 30.

and darkness that day, which beamed with unclouded lustre upon our first parents in Paradise? What, but the absence of Him who dwelleth in light, and called it out of darkness for the enjoyment of his creatures? — Why do we wander in this vale of tears, exposed to sickness and sorrow, to the temptations of Satan, and the fear of death? Because we yielded to the suggestions of that evil spirit, and were driven out from the presence of Him, who is the source of happiness, and from "the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (*a*) — Why are our bodies frail and weak, and a mass, as it were, of corruption; and our minds ignorant, depraved, and disordered? Why have we lost that beauty and glory in which our first father was created? Because we have lost too that innocence which then adorned him, when he was made in the image and likeness of God. — Why, lastly, was He, who was in the bosom of the Father, and partook of his glory before the world was, doomed to hide his brightness under the veil of our

(*a*) Rev. ii. 7.

flesh? Why was He, who was accustomed to the hymns of angels, content to be "the scorn of men, and the outcast of the people?" The same fatal cause which ruined man brought the Son of God from heaven to earth; that as we had lost the image of God, he for our sakes might assume our likeness, and bear our infirmities. — If we have a heart to feel, or a mind to comprehend, — if sin have not altogether destroyed that love of excellence and true glory, which was imparted to Adam at the beginning, — can we fail to see and deplore the corruption of our nature? Can we fail to love and admire that mercy which thought no sufferings too severe, that it might seek and save that which was lost?

It still remains to set before you this "Man of Sorrows" as your pattern. But a few words must suffice for this part of the subject. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (*a*)

(*a*) 1 Pet. iv. 1.

1. The first instance in which we should copy the example of Christ, is that we suffer *innocently:* that we be willing, if it so please God, "to suffer for righteousness' sake," and "rejoice if we be partakers of Christ's sufferings," and "reproached for the name of Christ:" but, at least, that we take care that our sufferings are not brought upon us by our sins; that we do not suffer as evil doers. Jesus suffered for the sins of others; not for his own. And we, if we would be like Him, must beware that our affliction is not our punishment. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;" your carnal lusts, and evil affections. Subdue and crucify the flesh; and live no longer "to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." A steady performance of his will is the best preparative for suffering it.

2. Learn from the example of the Son of God the little value which should be set upon worldly honour, or wealth, or prosperity. How worthless must all these have appeared in the eyes of Him who came down from heaven! And how worthless will they appear hereafter to those who

shall look back upon them from the mansions of eternal bliss! Surely, Jesus, in a state of the lowest poverty, even when he was bending under the cross, or bleeding upon it, was more worthy of honour than the highest earthly monarch. Why should you exalt in your own minds those things which are of no value in the sight of God? Why should you not "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures" of the world?

3. The sufferings of Christ teach us a lesson of the lowest humility, and the most perfect meekness. He, though he possessed all things, yet for our sakes became poor; though he might have obtained the praise of men, yet was willing to be despised, and rejected, and set at nought. How then shall pride exalt itself? How shall not all human vanity and ostentation bow down before him, who was meek and lowly in heart? Let us reflect, that we are sinners; and that we are disciples of Christ. How shall a sinner, though he be cloathed in purple, venture to lift up his head with pride? How shall a servant of the blessed Jesus, though seated on a throne, for-

get the crown of thorns which his Master wore ?

4. The fourth lesson to be learned is charity and forgiveness. And where else can we learn it so perfectly ? For greater love hath never man shewn: greater he cannot conceive. Poverty and grief, shame and distress, a violent and painful death, every thing which the mind revolts at, is patiently endured for the sake of sinners. Yet more, even the Father's wrath is poured forth upon his head. Nay, even he who knew no sin, is willing to be made sin for us; to be accounted a sinner; to undergo the sinner's punishment. What can move the heart, if love like this be disregarded ? Heaven stoops to earth; and the Son of God consents to be treated as the vilest malefactor. Who, that thinks of the blood of the cross, will refuse to shew mercy to the worst of his fellow-creatures ? Who will hope to share in the compassion and love of the cross, that shuts up his bowels against the bitterest of his enemies ?

To conclude the whole that has been said

on this interesting subject, let me entreat you, as the foundation of a right faith, and a virtuous practice, to fix deeply in your minds a sense of the vast importance of your Saviour's sufferings. Observe how the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets testified of them before hand; and recollect the high value which is placed upon them by our Lord and his apostles, since it is declared to have been *necessary* that Christ should suffer. Wherefore necessary? Because ordained in the counsels of God: because requisite for the salvation of men. Learn then to adore the blessed Jesus in that character in which his countrymen could not endure to view him, *as a suffering Saviour:* suffering in life and death, to make atonement for iniquity; suffering, to manifest the evil and grievous nature of sin; suffering, that he might himself be thereby made perfect; suffering, that he might bring many sons to glory. You will then be more and more amazed at that sublime dispensation of mercy and holiness, by which the Father freely gave his Son for us all; you will be more penetrated with love for that Son, who descended so

low, and endured so much; and you will not be ashamed of Him or his sorrows, nor refuse to bear with patience the load which may be laid upon you, either of chastening from God, or of contumely from man, "considering Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

SERMON XIV.

He that liveth, and was dead.

Revelation, i. 18.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the great proof of the truth of his religion. It is that, with which the Gospel must stand or fall. Our Lord himself proposed it as an evidence to the Jews that he came from God. For when they asked him what sign he shewed which could give him a right to exercise authority in driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and, as it were, taking possession of it in his Father's name, he answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise

it up (*a*) ;" meaning the temple of his body. They did destroy it; and to secure their victim they made the sepulchre sure wherein he was laid, sealing the stone, and setting a guard of soldiers to watch it. But what were seals and soldiers to oppose the King of Heaven? What power had death to detain the Lord of life? He who at first gave life to all things, could he not animate his own body? He who had restored others, could he not raise himself? After his body had lain in the grave three days ;— a space long enough to prove his death, but not so long as that his flesh should see corruption, —he rose again in glory. The seal of the tomb was broken — an angel descending from heaven removed the stone— the soldiers who kept it shook and became as dead men. His disciples, when they saw the words of their Lord thus signally fulfilled, were confirmed in their belief of him ; and constantly appealed to the resurrection, as that by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power. To us and to all the world it affords a proof equally convinc-

(*a*) John, ii. 19.

ing that Jesus is the true Messiah, and that all his promises to his followers will be made good. The teachers of other religions have endeavoured to uphold their authority by miracles: they have even suffered in support of what they taught. But when did any one rise from the dead? This great display of power was wanting. None but Christ could give it: for none but he was truly God.

It was necessary, therefore, that Jesus should rise, to prove the truth of his doctrine. It was necessary, also, that he should rise, to give us full assurance that the offering which he had made upon the cross was accepted by the Father; to assure us that the debt which he took upon himself was discharged; that a sufficient atonement had been made for sin; and that the wrath of God was appeased. — It was further necessary that he should rise, to assure us of our resurrection. By the first Adam sin entered into the world, and death by sin. By the second Adam we receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness; and the power of death, therefore, is destroyed. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive." (*a*) For "as sin reigned unto death, even so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (*b*)

These then are the blessed effects which follow the resurrection of Christ: the truth of our holy religion is confirmed; we receive assurance of pardon of our sins, and reconciliation to the Father; and we have a promise and a pledge, that we likewise shall break the bonds of death, and shall rise to die no more. Thus our Saviour's resurrection is the ground of our faith and of our brightest hopes. "If Christ be not risen," saith St. Paul, "your faith is vain." If Christ be not risen, "ye are yet in your sins." If Christ be not risen, "then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." But "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." (*c*) Therefore our faith is sure; our hope of pardon is built on a firm foundation; and death will be only the gate to immortality.

(*a*) 1 Cor. xv. 22. (*b*) Rom. v. 21.
(*c*) 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18, 20.

How should we rejoice with a holy joy, while we contemplate the glory of our dear Redeemer! The moment which appeared to lay him low at the feet of his enemies, that moment was the beginning of his triumphs. By his death he destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, the devil. And soon after, rising again, as if he laughed to scorn the weak efforts of those who thought to detain him a prisoner in the grave, he gave life to his religion, and established a kingdom to which there shall be no end. Let us then, the subjects of his kingdom, celebrate the greatness of his victory, while we admire that amazing humility, that patience and resignation, by which it was acquired. Let us at least in real adoration pay him that homage which the Jews in mockery offered him: let us bend the knee before him, and cry, Hail, King of Jews and Gentiles! King of kings, and Lord of lords! and while from year to year we celebrate with praise and thanksgiving the anniversary of his triumph, let us, as his true followers and disciples, be careful to rise with him from the

death of sin, and subdue all the power of darkness in our hearts.

The importance of establishing this fundamental article of our religion was felt by the Apostles. Accordingly, in the sermons which were delivered immediately after the day of Pentecost, and in almost all those which are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the resurrection of Christ forms a prominent feature. It was urged as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel; as a proof of the authority given to the Apostles to preach in the name of Jesus. It was pressed upon the Jews, as the fulfilment of "the promise made to the fathers (*a*);" upon the Gentiles, as giving assurance of a future judgment. (*b*) Through the rest of the New Testament it is spoken of as the ground of our belief and our hopes. St. Peter blesses God for having "begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (*c*) And St. Paul lays in this article of our religion the foundation of our faith (*d*),

(*a*) Acts, xiii. 32, 33.
(*b*) Acts, xvii. 31.
(*c*) 1 Pet. i. 3.
(*d*) 1 Cor. xv. 17.

of our justification (*a*), and of the most powerful motives to walk in newness (*b*) of life. Lastly, the resurrection is mentioned as that which conferred honour and glory on Jesus Christ, and invested him with power. St. Paul prays that he "may know the power of his resurrection (*c*)," and tells the Romans that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." (*d*) This was the beginning of his triumphs and exaltation; the demonstration of his power, and of his acceptance with God.

It was in the character of him who rose from the dead that Jesus made himself known to St. John in the verse of the text: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." The blessed Apostle was, as he tells us, "in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and hearing behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, he turned, and saw one like unto the Son of Man;" of whom he gives this magnificent description: "His head and his hairs were

(*a*) Rom. iv. 25.
(*b*) Rom. vi. 4.
(*c*) Phil. iii. 10.
(*d*) Rom. i. 4.

white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." — At the sight of an appearance so terrible, and so different from that of his blessed Master while on earth, St. John "fell at his feet as dead." But Jesus laid his hand upon him, saying unto him, "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Let us consider the text more particularly. "I am he that liveth, and was dead." That Jesus really died we cannot have a doubt. After hanging several hours upon the cross, he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost. The soldiers who broke the legs of the thieves that were crucified with him, finding that he was dead already, broke not his legs; but one of them with a spear pierced his side, and there came

forth blood and water. The body, when taken down from the cross, was wrapt in linen clothes with spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury ; and lay in a sepulchre three days.

Thus we see that Jesus is really "he that was dead." What reason have we to believe that having died he afterwards lived again? We have abundant reason. There was a great earthquake; and an angel removed the stone from the door of the sepulchre, that the Lord of glory might come forth. Two angels afterwards told the women that Jesus was risen. He shewed himself several times to his disciples, shewed them his hands and his feet, ate and drank with them, and conversed with them. At one time he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once. The Apostles and first Christians boldly asserted this, and laid down their lives bearing testimony to it. Even the guard who kept watch at the sepulchre went into the city, and told what had happened. Heaven and earth, men and angels, friends and foes, all conspired to bear their evidence in support of this astonishing fact.

Nor should this have been unlooked for, by those who had the Scriptures of the Prophets in their hands. There they should have learned that Christ "must rise again from the dead." (*a*) There they should have seen, in the deliverance of Isaac from the altar, and of Jonah from the belly of the fish, after he had been three days and three nights enclosed in it, a type of the deliverance of the Son of man out of the heart of the earth. There they should have read and understood that God "would not leave the soul of Christ in hell, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption (*b*);" that though "the waters compassed him about even to the soul, the depth closed him round about, and the earth with her bars was about him for ever," yet the "Lord his God would bring up his life from corruption." (*c*)

Such assurance have we from history and from prophecy that Jesus lives again. And, as we learn from himself, he not only liveth, but "behold, he is alive for evermore." Others have been raised from the dead. We

(*a*) John, xx. 9. (*b*) Psalm xvi. 10. (*c*) Jonah, ii. 5, 6

read of some in the Old Testament, some in the New. But these only returned to life for a short time, again to submit to the stroke of death. "Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (*a*) He could die but once, for he died on account of sin; and that sacrifice would be insufficient and ineffectual, if it could be offered again. He could die but once, for he died to overcome death and him that had the power of death; and his victory would be incomplete, if he were again to bow his head.

Having then wrought a great salvation, and being endued with power from on high, he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God through him. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. Having taken the sting from death, and victory from the grave, he is able to deliver his followers, and lead them to glory and happiness. "Behold," saith he, "I have the keys of hell and of death." Of hell, that is, of the place of departed spirits, to rescue from thence the souls of

(*a*) Rom. vi. 9.

his servants: Of death, to raise their bodies from the grave, and make them immortal like his own. "He openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth, and no man openeth." We know, indeed, that death is denounced against all men. Our bodies must return to dust; our spirits must go to the place appointed for them. But they shall not remain confined for ever. He who burst the door of the sepulchre in which he lay entombed, shall open a way for us, though the grave shall have shut its mouth upon us; and shall summon us from our prison to live again, and to live like him for evermore.

Listen to this, ye children of affliction, who mourn the loss of those who are dear to you. They are not lost for ever. They are asleep but for a time; to wake at the sound of the last trump. Listen to this, ye who look forward with terror to the approach of death, and are loth to resign your present existence. Hear the voice of your Saviour: "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord; "he that believeth in me, though he be dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in

me shall never die." Believe, therefore, in him; put your trust in him: and though death shall seize your mortal body, he shall be forced to resign his prey. You shall rise to die no more, when a voice shall cry to all that lie in the dust, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (*a*)

In the resurrection of Jesus, then, we have a pledge of our own. He is the first-fruits; and the harvest must be as the first-fruits. He is the head; and the members must follow the head. As our nature had become sinful by the transgression of Adam, it was doomed to return to the dust: as it has been restored by the Son of God, it shall be raised from the dust to inherit immortal glory. We shall rise again with our own bodies; but the bodies of the just shall be changed and glorified; changed, perhaps, into a likeness with the body of Christ at his transfiguration, when "his countenance shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." That which is now dishonourable shall then be glorious; what is now weak shall then be

(*a*) Ephesians, v. 14.

powerful; the natural shall become spiritual; the earthly shall become heavenly; this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. When all that is carnal, earthly, sensual, shall have sunk into the dust from whence it came; and a brightness from the eternal throne shall invest the righteous; when they shall appear once more after the image of Him who created them, in the image and after the likeness of God, — then they shall be fit to stand in his presence, able to bear that light which no mortal eye can behold, qualified to taste of those joys which no human heart can conceive.

The resurrection from the dead, and the glory prepared for the righteous, are the most encouraging incitements to well-doing. Whoever there is, that sincerely endeavours to perform his duty amid distress and discouragement; that is pious in the midst of those who scoff at religion; and is honest, in spite of temptations to knavery; that, walking humbly with his God, by faith and patience, by temperance and self-denial, works out his salvation; let

him comfort himself with the prospect of the reward which he shall receive from the hands of the Lord, the righteous Judge, at the great day. The hope of a resurrection after death is the anchor of the soul, on which saints and martyrs have in all ages rested, when they were fainting under tribulation and persecution. It is the great cordial which our Saviour holds out to his faithful followers, when their hearts sink within them through fear or torment.

Thus does the Gospel remove the scandal of the cross which it inflicts. Thus it offers a glorious recompence for every trial which it commands to be endured. And thus too it answers the objection which the philosophers of old, in their boasted refinement, urged against the resurrection of the body. The body, said they, presses down and defiles the soul; and it is only by shaking off this mass of corruption that the soul will be able to attain its high destiny, and exert its powers with freedom and with vigour. Such speculations we may excuse, and almost applaud, in those who knew not the religion of Jesus. But this,

when once preached, gloriously answered all doubts, removed all difficulties. What will remain of corruption or earthly matter, when "our earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, and we shall be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, that mortality may be swallowed up of life?"(*a*) What of pollution or defilement, when "beholding," not as now "in a glass," but face to face, "the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory?"(*b*) Recollect the glorious appearance of our Lord upon mount Tabor, when he wished to afford his disciples an emblem of his resurrection. Recollect the brightness of that vision, which was too great for their dull eyes to behold. Say, will a body so glorified, be a weight or hindrance to the soul? Or rather, must not the soul itself be changed and purified, that it may be fit to inhabit so splendid a mansion?

It is to the truly righteous and faithful, then, that these animating prospects belong. The unbeliever, the hypocrite, and the profane have no cause to rejoice in the

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 1, 3, 4. (*b*) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

doctrine of the resurrection. Their portion is with him whose temptations they have followed, whose works they have done. And where is that? In "outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." When the righteous "shall awake to everlasting life," these shall awake "to everlasting shame and contempt." They "have no inheritance in the kingdom of God or of Christ." They "reap corruption." Their "end is destruction." The face of the Lord, which his faithful servants contemplate with delight, they shall not be able to endure. That presence, where is the fulness of joy, they shall not see. "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

"Sing unto the Lord, then, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Tremble ye, who now go on thoughtless and careless, indulging your lusts for the present, and indifferent about

the future. How will you appear, when you shall be summoned from your graves, to give an account of your works! How will you endure the brightness of His appearance, whose "countenance is as the sun shining in its strength?" the power of His hand, which holds the keys of hell and of death? How will you endure to have that flesh, and those corruptible things, which have been your delight here, made your shame and torment? — It was by a life of the most perfect virtue, and most patient suffering, that the blessed Jesus attained his great exaltation: he did the will of his Father upon earth, before his Father appointed him a kingdom: he bore a cross, before he enjoyed a crown. And it is not a careless, vicious life, that will make us partakers of the happiness which he purchased so dearly. If we please ourselves here, shall we be rewarded as his followers hereafter? If we make our duty and our religion subservient to our lusts and appetites, that religion which does not make us holy, and virtuous, will never make us happy. If we do not "set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth,"

those things above will never be our portion, when the earth and all that it contains shall have passed away.

That which is the leading article of our faith cannot fail to supply many practical inferences. I shall beg your attention to those which are most important, though in setting them before you I should mention what is familiar to your minds, or repeat what has been already suggested in this discourse.

I. The consideration of Christ's resurrection should beget in us a firm faith in him as God and Lord. This was the effect produced upon the Apostle Thomas. When Jesus had condescended to afford him that particular evidence which he had presumptuously required, he exclaimed in full conviction and humble adoration, "My Lord, and my God!" It is to be observed that Jesus, while he gently reproved the tardiness of the apostle's assent, received these high titles without expressing the smallest censure. Hence we may venture to infer that the apostle's faith, and expression of

his faith, were pleasing to Christ. Perhaps the blessing pronounced at that time upon those "who having not seen yet believe," belongs in strict propriety to those persons only who acknowledge Jesus for their God and Lord.

The resurrection is indeed a most powerful and convincing proof of the Divinity of our Redeemer. None but He who is Almighty could say, "I have power to lay down my life, and have power to take it again." (*a*) None but He could challenge his enemies to destroy the temple of his body, pledging himself to raise it up in three days.

II. And as our faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ receives its full confirmation from his rising again, so we are hereby assured of the efficacy of all that he has done for us; assured of our pardon, our justification, our sanctification, our acceptance with God. In his suffering we were punished, "the iniquities of us all being laid upon him:" in his resurrection we are re-

(*a*) John, x. 18.

stored to favour. This is the act of grace, by which he who was our surety was delivered from prison and from punishment, and re-instated in the Father's favour. "Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again." And in him are all his members risen. Having been "buried with him in baptism, we are risen with him through faith." "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (*a*)

III. The consideration of this subject should beget in us a lively and steadfast hope. By faith we believe that Jesus triumphed over death and hell: by hope we look forward to that time when we shall

(*a*) Eph. ii. 5, 6. — See Barrow's Exposition of the Creed, from which this paragraph is borrowed, v. i. p. 450, or v. ii. p. 315, 316.

partake in the triumph, and exchange this "house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust (*a*)," for "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (*b*) Christ is the "first-born from the dead," and we are the sons of the resurrection. We are the members of his body, and shall rise with our head. For if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in us, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies. "Blessed then be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." (*c*)

But let us never forget that hope implies a fixed persuasion of the excellence of an object, and an ardent desire to obtain it. Nay more, hope places us, as it were, already in possession of it; we enjoy it beforehand: too often, alas! in earthly objects

(*a*) Job, iv. 19. (*b*) 2 Cor. v. i. (*c*) 1 Peter, iii. 4.

the pleasure of anticipation is all the enjoyment we have. Need I say then that hope cannot exist, unless there be a taste and relish for that which we pursue? The same disposition, which will enable us to enjoy the pleasure hereafter, must be formed in us now, that we may ardently desire it. Those holy affections, without which even the presence of God could afford no delight, must be cherished and cultivated here; or our hope is nothing but a sensual love of pleasure, not a pure desire of heavenly bliss. Blessed and happy he, who, through the assisting grace of God, effectually works in himself that great change which will fit him to enjoy the heavenly vision; who "puts off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and is renewed in the spirit of his mind, and puts on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Blessed he, who goes on from strength to strength; gradually laying aside all that is dishonourable, weak, and natural; gradually acquiring all that is glorious, powerful, and spiritual. His heart will be glad, and his glory will

rejoice at the bright prospect of a happy resurrection. His hope is an anchor, sure and steadfast, entering within the veil, and fastening the soul to God. This life is but the beginning of the next. Even in this vale of misery he will be cheered with a foretaste of the joys prepared for the righteous, when they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

IV. And this leads to the last and most important lesson: for our faith in the resurrection of Jesus, and the hope of our own resurrection should make us rise, even in this life, from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness, and set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. As the Son of God hath taken our nature to himself, so we are, as St. Peter says, "partakers of the divine nature, if we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust." As we were at first formed in the image and likeness of God, so that likeness having been destroyed by sin, we must now be renewed in the image of Christ. "Therefore as he was raised up from the dead by the glory of

the Father, even so we ought to walk in newness of life." 'There must be a spiritual resurrection of the soul, before there can be a comfortable resurrection of the body.' (*a*) Blessed and holy is he who hath part in this first resurrection; on "him the second death shall have no power."

"Awake then to righteousness," my brethren, "and sin not," for if you lie down in the grave while you are asleep and dead in sin, you shall wake indeed at the sound of the last trump, which shall summon you to the judgment-seat of Christ; but you shall wake to shame and misery. Rouse yourselves therefore in a sense of your danger. Shake off the fatal slumber, which is the forerunner of eternal death. You, as Christians, are children of light, candidates for heaven, heirs of immortal glory. Walk as children of light. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Raise your thoughts and desires to things above, and fix your affections on heavenly objects, on those unspeakable joys which are prepared for the faithful. Your Saviour

(*a*) Bishop Pearson on the Creed.

calls you to him. Follow him in righteousness and holiness upon earth, that you may follow him in glory to heaven. — "Awake then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Awake from slumber; the night of ignorance and vice is past; the day-spring from on high hath visited the world. Rise, as from the dead: leave buried in the grave thy corrupt affections, thy evil habits, the filth of sin, and all uncleanness; and rise to newness of life, to walk from henceforth in the white robes of purity and holiness, and live unto God. And Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light, who hath triumphed over death and Satan, shall spread abroad his glorious light, shall illuminate thy mind, shall pour his reviving graces into thine heart, and after delivering thee by a glorious resurrection from the power of death, shall crown thee with everlasting happiness in his heavenly kingdom, where he reigneth for ever in glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

SERMON XV.

The Intercessor.

Heb. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The object of St. Paul in this epistle is to convince the Hebrews of the excellence of the Gospel. And this he chiefly endeavours to do, by setting before them the dignity of Jesus Christ who established it in the world; — his dignity, by nature and by office: — by nature, as he was higher than the angels, and was himself God: — by office, as he far surpassed those priests under the law, who were appointed to

minister in holy things. The business of the priest was to stand, as it were, between God and man; to intercede with God, and "make atonement (*a*) for the sins of men:" he was to minister unto the Lord in the congregation, and to offer up their prayers to him: particularly, he was to present unto God sacrifices and offerings made by himself for the people, on account of trespasses and sins. "Every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." (*b*) Now the priests under the Jewish law were appointed by God; and the services which they performed were instituted and approved by God. Nothing therefore could be more effectual towards bringing the Jews to faith in Jesus Christ, than shewing them that their priests were far surpassed by Him; that their sacrifices and services were passed away like shadows; and the covenant which the Almighty had made with their fathers was superseded by a new

(*a*) Numb. viii. 19. (*b*) Heb. v. 1.

and better covenant confirmed by the blood of Christ.

The priest was, in every respect, a mediator, to stand between God and the people; to lay before him their failings and imperfections, their wants and desires; and to deliver to them his law, his counsel, his pardon, and his blessing. In every instance Jesus Christ was a true priest: he made atonement for the sins of the world — he revealed the will of God to his creatures — he intercedes for them with the Father. But though he was a true priest, he was not such an one as those who "stood daily ministering" under the law. His was a higher, a heavenly, an unchangeable priesthood. The priests under the law "offered oftentimes the same sacrifices; and those, sacrifices of bulls and of goats, which could never take away sins: but he offered one sacrifice for sins, — the sacrifice of himself — an all-sufficient sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God. They were like those for whom they ministered, sinful in their nature; sinners by much wilful transgression; they had need therefore "to offer up sacrifices, first for their own sins, and

then for the people's;" but he "was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" able to make atonement for others, since he was himself pure from all spot or blemish. They "entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true:" he, into the true sanctuary, "into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us." Those priests were continually changing, one passing away, and another succeeding into his place; they could "not continue, by reason of death;" but "he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood; and ever liveth to make intercession." In these respects our great High-Priest far excelled the priests who ministered under the law of Moses. He excelled them, as the substance excels the shadow; or as the finished portrait surpasses the hasty sketch.

During his life upon earth our blessed Redeemer may be truly said to have in many respects executed the office of a priest. By explaining the law of God, by teaching his disciples to pray, by praying to the Father for them,—he performed several of the priestly functions. He was

the messenger of the covenant. The Lord of hosts came to his temple (*a*), and filled the house (*b*) with glory. — At his death he offered himself in sacrifice; making the cross his altar, and pouring forth his blood as a propitiation for our sins. Then, therefore, he was the true high-priest; the one Mediator between an offended God, and a sinful world. — And his priesthood did not then cease; for it continued after his death. When he had ascended into heaven, he more particularly entered upon it, as intercessor and advocate with the Father When, like the high-priest on the day of expiation, he entered within the veil, and presented himself before the mercy-seat in the highest heavens, to plead the cause of man whom he had redeemed, he was in the highest sense a priest for us; and continuing his intercession as long as the world shall last, he remaineth a priest for ever.

Thus it appears that Jesus Christ, during his life, at his death, and after his ascension, was in every respect a true priest;

(*a*) Mal. iii. 1. (*b*) Hag. ii. 7

one, of whom the priests under the law, during their ministrations, were the figures and representatives. It was for the purpose of executing this office, that he came into the world; in other words, for the purpose of making atonement for the sins of men. "It behoved him," saith the Apostle, "in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (*a*)

You see then how Jesus Christ was a priest, and the importance of considering him as such; since it was only in that character that he could offer sacrifice, and make atonement to God. Let us now proceed to view him more particularly as Intercessor and Advocate with the Father. Here we are to look at him, not as making atonement; but as presenting his sacrifice before God, and pleading the merits of it on our behalf. "He is able," saith the Apostle in the text, "to save them to the uttermost

(*a*) Heb. ii. 17.

that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He is able to save them to the uttermost, or, to the end, "evermore," as the margin of our Bible has it. He is able to obtain for them perfect, complete, everlasting salvation. How does he obtain this? The Apostle does not make mention of his death. That was no doubt the great, meritorious cause of their salvation;— the cause of pardon, grace, and every spiritual blessing. But the Apostle here speaks of the intercession of Christ — his pleading the merits of his death before the Father, for the full and final salvation of those who, though compassed with many infirmities, believe and obey the Gospel. To intercede for any one, is to take his part, to plead his cause, to pray and entreat for him. This then our blessed Lord is represented as doing for us. He prays the Father for us, and by his intercession prevails for the pardon of our sins, and for our receiving those graces of which we stand in need.

There are three benefits more especially, which the Son of God is said in Scripture

to procure for us by his intercession. These are, 1. The forgiveness of our sins: 2. The gift of the Holy Spirit: 3. The favourable acceptance of our prayers.

1. The forgiveness of our sins is said in Scripture to be procured for us by the intercession of Jesus Christ. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." (*a*) So St. Paul. — "It is God that justifieth," that is, that acquits and pardons: "who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (*b*)

The sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was the method appointed by the Father from all eternity, for restoring lost man to the favour of God. Having made this sacrifice, our blessed Lord returned to the bosom of the Father, to present himself, as it were, before him, "as a Lamb that had been slain." Seated at the right hand of God he continually exhibits his sufferings before

(*a*) 1 John, ii. 1, 2. (*b*) Rom. viii. 34.

the Father, and preserves, and secures (*a*) to us all the benefits of his most precious blood-shedding. Not that the Father is unmindful, or forgets to be gracious — not that he can require to be reminded of that mercy which he has so graciously promised, and which we so much need. But this intercession of Christ was intended probably to remind us that in him all the promises of God are sure and steadfast; that it is only through him, and for his sake, that our sins are forgiven, and our pardon sealed in heaven.

Remember then, my brethen, that it is not for your own sake, but on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, that pardon of your sins is extended to you. It is not your repentance, nor your faith, nor your obedience afterwards, that can restore you to the favour of God. These are all necessary to be done on your part — a sincere repentance and sorrow for sin, a firm faith and trust in your Saviour, and a careful, steady obedience to all God's commandments: — these are all necessary to qualify you to partake of the mercy of your hea-

(*a*) See Schleusner, under ἐντυγχάνω.

venly Father. But not on account of these, or of any thing which you can do, is that mercy granted you. It is only for the sake of Jesus Christ — on account of his merits — and through his intercession. The Most High must look upon the face of his Anointed, before he can look with favour on any of his fallen, sinful, frail creatures.

2. The gift of the Holy Spirit is also said in Scripture to be obtained by the intercession of Christ. "I will pray the Father," said he to his disciples, "and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth." (*a*) This Holy Spirit the Father is said to send in the Son's name. (*b*) And again, it is said, that Jesus "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received the promise of the Father, shed forth the Holy Ghost." (*c*) So that it was not till our blessed Lord had ascended into heaven, that this precious gift came down upon the Apostles. For, as we are told in one place, "the Holy Ghost was not

(*a*) John, xiv. 16. (*b*) John, xiv. 26.
(*c*) Acts, ii. 33.

yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (*a*)

But not the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit only, but that continual aid and grace by which we are enabled to think and do those things that be rightful, — this we receive through the intercession of Jesus Christ. It is thus he dwells with his disciples; thus he is with his Church always, even to the end of the world. Seated on high, and knowing all things; knowing our wants and our weakness; sensibly touched with a feeling of our infirmities; he intercedes for us with the Father; and supplies his servants continually with that divine grace, which may more than make amends for all the weakness of their nature — more than support them under all the calamities of life, and against all the assaults of their spiritual enemies.

When I speak of this divine grace — the grace of the Spirit of God — I would include all spiritual blessings. And if you look into the word of God, you will find that all the blessings of the Gospel are

(*a*) John, vii. 39.

given through Jesus Christ. I do not say that they are expressly stated to be obtained by means of his intercesssion; but they are certainly and distinctly said to be given *through him* and *for his sake.* Thus — "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (*a*):" "through him we joy in God, as by him we have received the atonement." (*b*) "Grace," *i. e.* the free mercy of God, "reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ." (*c*) And "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ." (*d*) It is through him, that "God giveth us the victory (*e*);" and "on the behalf of him, that it is given to us not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake." (*f*) In short, every good gift and every perfect gift, grace to repent and believe, grace to do and to suffer, grace to persevere unto the end and finally obtain everlasting life, we receive from God, for the sake of our great High Priest, our Mediator and Intercessor. God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

(*a*) Rom. v. 1. (*b*) Rom. v, 11. (*c*) Rom. v. 21.
(*d*) Rom. vi, 23. (*e*) 1 Cor. xv. 57. (*f*) Phil. i. 29.

3. It is through Jesus Christ, that God is pleased to accept our prayers. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (*a*) As all blessings are to be obtained through our Saviour, so they are to be sought through him. As it is only by him that we are reconciled to God, so it is by him that we must have access to the Father. We have, of ourselves, no right to approach the throne of grace; no right to beg a favour at his hands, whom we have so often provoked by our sins. But by Him who is the Mediator between God and man, we may have access, even with confidence. He will, as it were, present our petitions — he will intercede with the Father for us, if that which we ask be fit for infinite wisdom and justice to grant. — Christ is an able and a willing advocate for us in the courts above — singularly qualified to procure us acceptance and favour with the Most High. As the dearly beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased, how powerful is his interest with the Father! how shall the Father deny any thing to him who was obedient, even unto

(*a*) John, xv. 16.

death? What shall be withholden upon his intercession, who has consented to make his soul an offering for sin, and to be numbered with the transgressors? — Then again — as he knows our state, as he is touched with a sense of our infirmities, as he has borne our griefs, and taken part in our sorrows, as he has felt the strength of temptation, and the arts of the evil one, he is able and willing to succour them that are tempted: — he can feel for us — he can pity us — he can plead for us. He is ready no doubt to offer up our prayers with the same earnestness and importunity with which he himself prayed to be delivered from the evil hour that was coming upon him.

Thus you see that Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and his creatures in these three respects more particularly; that he obtains the pardon of their sins; that he procures for them the aid of the Holy Ghost and all spiritual blessings; and that he presents their prayers to the throne of grace. How greatly then, my dear brethren, should you rejoice with pious joy and gratitude, that your Saviour is exalted

to the right hand of God! that he, who came upon earth to deliver you from the Father's wrath, now continues to be your Mediator and advocate! He is exalted to the highest honour and power; and that honour and power he employs for your everlasting good. In every situation, and in every character, he is the friend of his people. On earth he suffers for their sins—in heaven he pleads their cause. Whether he hangs on the cross, or sits at the right hand of the Father, he is still a Saviour, and a Mediator, to reconcile them to God, and restore them to love and favour. Let it be our anxious endeavour to be worthy of his love; that, as the Apostle saith, having been "reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we may be saved by his life."

Let me now set before you in a very few words the practical lesson which we learn from considering Jesus Christ, as we have done, as our Intercessor and Advocate. St. Paul says in the text, "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Those then whom he is able to

save must come unto God by him. How are we to come to God? 1. By seeking his favour. — 2. By approaching him in prayer.

First. To come unto God, means to seek his favour. And his favour can only be obtained by a faithful and diligent performance of our duty. We must obey him in all things — we must in all things do his will. This it was, which Jesus Christ set before him as his rule during life. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." And for doing his will so faithfully, so perfectly, he was rewarded with the highest honour, and a name that is far above every name. The same must be your rule, my brethren. You must seek the will of God above all things, if you would come to him — if you would be saved by Jesus Christ. To come unto God, may mean to be united to him as sons to a parent: and then must you not seek to please him? — It may mean to serve him faithfully as a Master: and still, to please him must be the object of your endeavours. — Let this then be your earnest labour and desire, to seek the favour of God — to do his

will. Set this before you as your highest aim. Let it be your greatest delight and greatest glory, to do the will of God in all things. Approve yourselves his servants by having an eye to all his commandments. Endeavour, like the patriarchs of old, to walk with God in this life. Draw near to him in heart and mind; and let him be your Father, Master, and Friend here, that Christ may bring you to him, and that you may enjoy his presence hereafter.

Secondly, and more properly, perhaps, you must come to him by approaching to him in prayer. (*a*) This it is to come to him; — to enter into his presence, and pour your supplications into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. When you go into your chamber and pray to your Father in secret, you may be truly said to draw nigh to him; and he will also draw nigh to you. When you come before him in the congregation, you appear in his house; and he is, be assured, in the midst of you. When you wait upon him at his altar, and feed upon

(*a*) See Schleusner, under προσερχομαι.

the sacred food which is there provided for you — then, in the highest sense, you come to him with a sacrifice and an offering: you present your bodies and souls, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

Be it your care then, my brethren, to approach to God daily in prayer: daily, I say, both morning and evening at your homes; at the same time "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together," at the appointed place and times of public prayer. In all your wants, pour out your hearts before him: for all your blessings, offer him the sacrifice of praise: under a penitent sorrow for your sins, entreat his pardon: under a deep sense of your weakness, implore his almighty aid: with the dread of his judgments, and a prospect of his heavenly blessings, ever before your eyes, seek by prayer to avert his wrath, and beseech him to lift up the light of his countenance upon you.

And since the apostle teaches that we must come unto God by Jesus Christ, remember always, that His powerful aid must support your endeavours, and His

gracious intercession must gain acceptance for your prayers. Let all your hopes therefore be fixed on the atonement which he has made for your sins, and upon those infinite merits which he now pleads in your behalf. Look to his example for your rule, and to his Spirit for your assistance in doing the will of God. And by him offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise to God continually, putting up your petitions, and giving thanks in his name.

SERMON XVI.

The Head over all Things to the Church.

Ephesians, i. 22, 23.

And gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

There are three characters under which Jesus Christ is described, which seem to comprehend every office that he has undertaken for the sake of his creatures: a Prophet, to give instruction; a Priest, to make intercession; and a King, to govern. He appeared as a Prophet, or teacher, upon earth; when he preached the Gospel and instructed the people in the ways of God. The office of a Priest he partly exercised

upon earth, when he offered himself in sacrifice; and he now continues to exercise it in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for us. His Kingly office he executes entirely in heaven. It was not till after his ascension and exaltation to the right hand of the Father, that he entered upon it. Then he was "made both Lord and Christ (*a*)," "Lord of lords, and King of kings." (*b*) — In some of my former discourses I have shewn him to you in the two first of these characters, as Prophet or Teacher; and as Priest, or Intercessor. We will now, by God's help, consider him as King.

When Jesus had by his righteousness fulfilled the whole law, and by his death upon the cross had made satisfaction to the Father for the sins of all men, he was received up on high, and sat down on the right hand of God: that is, in the most exalted place, far above every created being: "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and

(*a*) Acts, ii. 36. (*b*) Rev. xvii. 14.

every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (*a*) "Angels and authorities and powers were made subject to him (*b*);" and "all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth." (*c*)

This exaltation was foretold by the Psalmist: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool (*d*):" "Thou hast ascended up on high; thou hast led captivity captive (*e*):" and again, "Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things in subjection under his feet." (*g*)

It was in both natures, as God, and as man, that Christ was glorified. As God, indeed, he was ever present with the Father, — present every where; and he spoke of himself as being in heaven, even while he was conversing with the Jewish ruler. (*h*) But the glory which he had with

(*a*) Eph. i. 21. (*b*) 1 Pet. iii. 22. (*c*) Matt. xxviii. 18.
(*d*) Psalm cx. 1. (*e*) Psalm lxviii. 18.
(*g*) Psalm viii. 5, 6.
(*h*) See Dr. T. Jackson's Works, vol. ii. p. 763, and vol. iii. p. 315.

the Father before the world was he laid aside for the purpose of becoming man. Even as God he humbled himself when he took upon himself the form of a servant. The same nature therefore which before was humbled, was now exalted. As Son of God he came down from heaven in humility : as Son of God he returned thither in glory.

Yet the honour which the Father bestowed upon him, and his heavenly kingdom, are perhaps more properly said to be obtained by him as man. It was as man, and in reward for the great things which he had done and suffered as man, that he was exalted to power and great glory. "For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is therefore set down at the right hand of God." He carried up into the presence chamber of the Majesty on high that flesh and blood of which he had been partaker upon earth : he bore in the courts above that name which he had received in the world in token of the salvation which he was to procure for his creatures. Therefore that person which was despised and rejected, scourged and

crucified by men, was highly exalted by God; and that blessed name, which was lightly esteemed upon earth, was magnified "far above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (*a*)

Let us adore with all thankfulness our merciful Father, who has so highly exalted our nature — that nature which sin had brought low, even to the dust; — who has graciously afforded us in our blessed Lord a pledge and assurance of the glory which is reserved in heaven for us; and has given us an example of lowliness and condescension, of meek suffering and a patient continuance in well-doing, rewarded with honour unspeakable. Because he humbled himself, was Jesus exalted; because he was obedient unto death, he obtained a crown of life and a sceptre of glory. He is properly *our Lord.* (*b*) This high and adora-

(*a*) 1 Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. (*b*) Jackson, v. iii. p. 363.

ble title belongs in a peculiar manner to Christ, God incarnate. It was thus that David in Spirit styled him: "The Lord," that is Jehovah, "said unto my Lord." And again "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Thus the apostle Thomas addressed him, "My Lord and my God." And thus St. Paul continually speaks of him; teaching his converts that "there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ" (*a*): and that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (*b*) This title is properly his, on account of the glory to which he is exalted, and the power which is given to him. For the Father hath given all things into his hand; and hath committed all judgment unto him. He ruleth over all, dispensing mercy and justice, upholding all things and disposing all things according to his infinite wisdom. Nor will he deliver up the kingdom to the Father till he shall have put all enemies under his feet, and gotten himself the victory over every thing that opposeth him. Then, when "death and hell and

(*a*) 1 Cor. viii. 6. (*b*) 1 Cor. xii. 3.

whosoever is not written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire," — then shall due honour be ascribed to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by his faithful servants, " redeemed by him out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue."

What is it now, which has given to the Son of God the peculiar claim to this title of Lord? What, but the mighty redemption which he hath wrought for those who were led captive by the evil one, and enslaved under the prince of darkness? The Lord of light descended from his throne in heaven, to combat with the rulers of the darkness of this world. He took our nature, that he might encounter the enemy; and shed his blood to obtain the victory. By that mysterious union of God with man, he performed the great work, and accomplished our salvation. That union in a state of lowliness and poverty delivered us from the power of sin and death: That union in a glorified state is the sure pledge and ground of all our hopes for a joyful resurrection to eternal life. And can we pay due honour to him who hath purchased

it at so great a price? Worthy, surely, is the Son of God, if greater love than man can practise or conceive can render him worthy — worthy, if the overthrow of his enemies, and the favour bestowed upon him by the Father, can prove him worthy — worthy, if the homage of men and angels, and of every creature in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, can be worthy of him — worthy is the Son of God, and Son of Man, "the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

But while we ascribe unto Christ all power and dominion, we must observe that these are exercised by him for the sake of his Church. His kingdom ruleth over all: but that is more peculiarly his kingdom which is continually spoken of as such in the New Testament; and that is his visible Church upon earth. It is his kingdom of grace, over which he reigns with all the power of a sovereign, and all the tenderness of a parent. Hereafter, when this world and all things in it shall have passed

away, when angels and the spirits of just men made perfect shall be united before the throne, grace will end in glory; and his kingdom will be indeed the kingdom of heaven. In the mean time, his visible Church is the object of his peculiar care; and for the sake of it he constantly exercises that power which the Father has put into his hands. So says the Apostle in the text, where, after speaking of "the mighty power of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet," he adds, "and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." — The Apostle's language in this text is not very clear: it may be useful therefore to ascertain its meaning, especially as we shall thereby learn the relation which is between Christ and his Church, and the benefits which it derives from him.

"And gave him" — that is, appointed him. The Father appointed the Son. Every part of the great scheme of redemption is in Scripture ascribed to God the Father as its first and great cause. It was "His good pleasure, which he purposed in himself before the foundation of the world, to gather together all things in Christ." (*a*) "When the fulness of the time was come, He sent his Son (*b*)" into the world. By His determinate counsel and foreknowledge Jesus was crucified and slain." (*c*) But God raised him up, and exalted him to his own right hand, and appointed him to be Judge of quick and dead. The great work of salvation is for the good of man, but to the glory of God the Father.

"To be head over all things to the Church, which is his body" — or, as some understand the words by a slight transposition, gave him who is placed over all things to the Church as its head. The meaning will be nearly the same; namely, that the great office which Christ now executes, and for which he was raised to the right hand

(*a*) Eph. i. 4. 9, 10. (*b*) Gal. iv. 4. (*c*) Acts, ii. 23.

of the Father, is to be the head, the ruler and director, the supporter and comforter of his church; that is, of those who are taken out of the world, and brought near to him in baptism, who are thereby made his people, or, in the figurative language of the Apostle, his body: — who are, to use a different figure, which St. Paul adopts in another part of this epistle, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth "unto an holy temple in the Lord." (*a*)

"The fulness of him that filleth all in all." — The word "fulness" probably means complement, or completion. As the head is not complete without the body, nor the body without the head; for neither the one nor the other alone makes a perfect man; so Christ is said to be incomplete without the Church, since he wants that, upon which he may bestow his gifts; and what is the Church without Christ, but a lifeless carcase? He "filleth all in all," —

(*a*) Eph. ii. 20, 21.

he filleth all the members with all spiritual gifts and blessings. The Church having Him for its head, and His life-giving Spirit infused into all its parts, grows into "a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (*a*)

From the text thus explained we learn, as I told you, First, the relation which is between Christ and his Church: Secondly, the benefits which it derives from him.

I. The relation which is betwixt Christ and his Church: He is the Head: the Church is his body.

There are many emblems or figures, by which the Church is described in Scripture. It is set forth as a kingdom, a city, a temple, a bride, the branches of a vine, a family, a sheepfold. All these are lively representations of the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church. He is the Sovereign of the kingdom: the Light of the city: the God of the temple: the Husband of the bride: the Body of the vine, which diffuses health and fruitful-

(*a*) Eph. iv. 13.

ness to the branches: the Master of the family, who provides for the support of his servants: the Shepherd of the fold, who feeds his flock, and tenderly nurses the lambs in his bosom. Whatever care and protection, whatever strength and support, whatever direction and guidance, whatever pardon of sins, comfort in distress, help in present trouble, and hope of future glory, the Church needs in its state of trial upon earth, all is abundantly supplied by Christ, in whom all fulness dwells.

But the most perfect image under which the Church is represented in Scripture is that of the human body. Here is order and harmony among the various parts, some honourable, some uncomely; each adapted to its particular use, and regularly performing the office for which it is designed: while a general sympathy and mutual feeling pervade every member; a lively emblem of that charity which is the ornament and support of the Church. Of this body Christ is the head. He giveth eyes to the blind, and understanding to the simple. From him descend those gifts and graces which nourish every part, so

that the whole "increases with the increase of God." Separated from him, the body dies: and even if his divine grace be withdrawn, or be neglected, the vital principle is impaired, the members no longer perform their office, for want of that nourishment which should "make increase of the body, according to the effectual working in every part."

Christ, then, is in two respects the head of the Church:—as he is its Ruler and Governor; and as he is the Giver of all good gifts. As its Ruler and supreme Lord, he ordereth all things for its everlasting benefit; he opposeth the power of the evil one, that the gates of hell may never prevail against it; he has given laws for the direction of its members, and appointed ministers to conduct under him the affairs of this his spiritual kingdom; he leads his servants by his mighty power and ready help through this scene of probation, apportioning their trials to their strength, checking their presumption, cheering their fainting spirits, smoothing the rough vale of misery, enlightening the very darkness of the shadow of death; never leaving nor

forsaking them, till they are more than conquerors through him who once loved them and gave himself for them, and is now ready to present them to the Father. As Giver of all good gifts, he sends down the Spirit from above, to be the support and comfort of his Church. This is the one great gift, including all others which, when (in the language of the Psalmist) he had "led captivity captive, he received for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (*a*) This it is, by which he "filleth all in all." — But thus we are anticipating the second thing to be learned from the text, namely,

II. The benefits which the Church derives from Christ as its Head: "He filleth all in all;" — that is, he filleth all his members and all places with all good things. The Holy Spirit (to continue what I have just been saying) is that great and good gift, which Christ procures from the Father, and gives to his Church. This was the promise which he made to his disciples,

(*a*) Psalm lxviii. 16.

when they were sorrowing under the prospect of losing their beloved Master and Teacher. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth." (*a*) This Spirit is the third Person in the Holy Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son: — proceding from them according to his divine nature from all eternity; and sent by them for the aid, instruction, and comfort of the Church. So important is this gift of the Spirit, that our blessed Lord speaks of his personal absence from among his disciples as expédient (*b*) for them, because it would be the means of the Holy Ghost coming to them. How great must be that blessing, how precious that gift, which could compensate for the loss of such an Instructor!

The office of the Spirit in the Church is threefold (*c*): to instruct, to comfort, to intercede for it. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." This was peculiarly the office of the Spirit when he descended on the apos-

(*a*) John, xiv. 16. 17. (*b*) John, xvi. 7.
(*c*) See note at the of this Sermon.

tles upon the day of Pentecost, enlightening their minds with a knowledge of the truth, and giving them the gift of divers languages, that they might be enabled to preach the Gospel to every nation under heaven. Nor did the influence of the Spirit cease, except in its miraculous operations, with the first ages. He is still a Spirit of truth, ever present with the faithful, to shew them the good and the right way, to lead them to God the Father of all, to a firm faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour, and to an earnest desire and joyful hope of the blessed inheritance of the saints.

He is also a Comforter. This is the title by which (according to our translation) he is so frequently spoken of by our Lord in his conversation with his disciples before his death. By them a comforter was greatly needed; and one was sent from heaven who was able to make them amends for the loss of every thing in this world, even for the absence of the Son of God himself;—able to change their doubts into joyful assurance, their fears into ardent zeal and constant perseverance; and so to

possess their minds with the Spirit of their Lord, that like him they could endure the cross, despising the shame, and triumph in the midst of persecution and death. And are the gracious aids of this Comforter now withdrawn? Oh no. Say, ye who have been bowed down under affliction and distress, ye who have attended the death-bed of an expiring saint, or have yourselves at any time drawn near to the darkness of the grave, — how, when this world fades from the sight, and all that is great or desirable in it is no better than a dream, how does the Spirit then give solid comfort and real joy! what light does he shed forth to brighten the darkest hours of sorrow! what patience does he supply to arm the suffering soul! what glorious visions does he place before the eyes of the dying Christian! what blissful anticipations of the heavenly reward!

The Holy Ghost is also given to be an Intercessor. So says St. Paul: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can-

not be uttered." (*a*) He helps our infirmities in prayer: he teaches us what we should pray for, quickens our devotion, checks our too eager desires, infuses into the soul the grace of pious resignation and trust in our heavenly Father. And not only this, but he himself perhaps intercedes for us. Perhaps, — for it is with doubt and hesitation that we must speak on so mysterious a subject — he who puts into our hearts good desires and teaches us to utter them in prayer, may waft those prayers as incense to the throne of grace, and make them acceptable in the sight of God.

These three offices of Instructor, Comforter, and Intercessor, are performed by the blessed Spirit, which is sent by Christ as Head of the Church. And not only these; but if there be any other good gift not included in them, this also proceeds from the Spirit. Every thing in us that is good or lovely, pleasing to God or profitable to man, is from him. He is a Spirit of holiness to purify our corrupt nature, a

(*a*) Rom. viii. 26.

Spirit of contrition and repentance to pierce the hardened heart, a Spirit of love to strengthen and elevate its desires and fix them upon God. He it is, "by whose holy inspiration we are enabled to think those things that be good, and by whose merciful guiding we perform the same." His power working in the heart produces the blessed fruits of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

This then is that precious gift bestowed by Him who is at the right hand of God; this is that divine Spirit, by which he animates the Church, which is his body; by which he "filleth all in all." What a magnificent idea is here presented to us of the Church of Christ! That Being who fills all space, who upholds all things, and without whose sustaining power the whole creation would quickly become a heap of ruins, — that Being is particularly present in his Church, in the body of the faithful; here he abides, and delights to dwell; he fills it with his Spirit; he animates every member, pervades every part. He is about us, and within us, guiding us by his coun-

sel, leading us by his hand. — How awful is the thought! As members of his Church we tread on consecrated ground; we are ourselves dedicated to the service of the Most High; every thing around us is holy. The glory of the Lord fills his Temple, and the Lamb is the light thereof! — Oh that while we tread his courts, our stubborn hearts could be so subdued by his mighty power, — could be so softened by his prevailing grace, — could be so sanctified by his holy Spirit, that we might receive him into them as a beloved and honoured guest, and every thought and every feeling might be his own, dictated by his inspiration, and moved according to his will!

The lesson which I would draw from this discourse shall be expressed in the words of St. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,

and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." (*a*) The apostle, animated almost beyond his usual fervour, has here expressed, what is but feebly represented in a translation, his sense of the transcendent excellence of the Gospel, of that which he elsewhere calls "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Let it be the object of your prayers, my brethren, and of your most earnest endeavours, to obtain a thorough knowledge and lively sense of the blessing which you enjoy by being made partakers of the Gospel, and admitted into the Church, which is the kingdom of God's dear Son. Look not upon our blessed Lord as a hard taskmaster, or upon his Gospel as laying you under severe obligations: do not repine that you are commanded to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to renounce the lust of the world, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Such unworthy views and feelings were not those which

(*a*) Eph. i. 17, 18, 19.

were entertained by the first disciples. They rejoiced in the Gospel as a rich treasure, an invaluable prize, a glorious inheritance. They seem at a loss for words to express "the exceeding richness of God's grace," by which they were "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Contemplate the hope of your calling, and the riches of your glorious inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of that power which has secured to his faithful servants the everlasting possession; and has given them assurance of it, by raising Christ from the dead, and exalting him to his own right hand in the heavenly places. Look upon your Christian calling as a great, and honourable, and holy profession: great and honourable, as it is the service of the Most High; holy, as he who hath called you to it is holy. Be greatly thankful for that mercy which hath brought you into his Church, into the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly of the faithful, the holy place, where you may walk with God, where Christ is your King and High Priest, the Head over all things to his Church.

And oh! with what feelings of reverence and godly fear should you contemplate your being thus brought near to him, and made members "of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones!" How should you be animated by his Spirit, and led by his example! How should you study his words, and copy every part of his conduct! How closely should you be united to him in love, and to your brethren for his sake! How ardently should you press forward to attain like him the joy that is set before you, that where he is ye may be also!

NOTE TO SERMON XVI.

THESE three offices appear to be implied in the expression παρακλητος — so inadequately rendered "Comforter" in our Translation. The word occurs five times in the New Testament. In John, xiv. 16, our Saviour speaks of *another Paraclete*, "the Spirit of Truth;" who must clearly be similar to himself. In this passage, therefore, the word seems to mean an Instructor. So again v. 26, "the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." In this sense of admonition or exhortation, the verb παρακαλεω, and noun παρακλησις, are frequently used in the Acts of the Apostles. See c. ii. 40; xi. 23; xiii. 15; xiv. 22. And thus Schleusner and Campbell understand it in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Chapters of St. John's Gospel.—2dly. The term has been frequently supposed to mean a Comforter, and to be synonymous with מנחם, a name, by which the Messiah was known among the Jews. See Luke, ii. 25. In this sense the word παρακλητος is used by the LXX. And thus Doddridge understands it in St. John's Gospel, because our blessed Lord's discourse, which is there recited, is of a consolatory nature.—3dly. The word is used in St. John's 1st Epistle, c. ii. 1, where it is spoken of Jesus Christ, and clearly means an

Advocate or Intercessor. This sense it seems to have in St. John's Gospel, xv. 26; xvi. 7, 8; namely, that of pleading the cause of Christ against his adversaries. And Bishop Pearson 'conceives the notion of παράκλητος common to the Son and the Holy Ghost to consist especially in the office of intercession.' On the Creed, Art. 8.

Hammond mentions three senses of the word παράκλητος; those of Advocate, Exhorter, and Comforter. Instead of the second of these Campbell substitutes Monitor, which word he uses in his translation. Perhaps, if the word Counsellor is not too technical, it will be nearly what is wanted, signifying both an adviser and a pleader, and the use of this word is warranted by Is. ix. 6. But see Campbell's note on John, xiv. 16.

SERMON XVII.

The Restorer of Israel and Judah.

Zechariah, ii. 10, 11, 12, 13.

Sing, and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee: And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.

Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

There are two observations arising out of this text, which it is proper to make previously to our entering upon the subject of this discourse.

First, you will take notice of the extraordinary manner, in which the name of the Lord, or Jehovah, is applied to two distinct persons: to him who sends, and to him who is sent. "I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord: and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee." This "glorious and fearful name" (*a*) is introduced no less than five times in this passage; and in each instance the original word is Jehovah: that high and incommunicable title, expressive of self-existence, which the Almighty appropriated (*b*) to himself; "I am Jehovah: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another." (*c*) What now can we understand by this, but that there is another Person in the Godhead, besides the Father, to whom this great name belongs? And who is this but his only begotten Son — the Angel of the covenant — the Word of

(*a*) Deut. xxviii. 58.

(*b*) God himself says this name Jehovah is his memorial; that is, his appropriate perpetual name. — The proper name of a man, or any created being, is never called its "memorial." This is applied solely and exclusively to the essential name of the self-existent God. — Bishop Horsley on Hosea, xii. 5.

(*c*) Isa. xlii. 8.

God — the Revealer of the Father's will to man! He has this high and adorable title, and with it (*a*) all the attributes, and all the glories of the Godhead, "Lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, Jehovah, God of Hosts is his name." (*b*)

The other remark which I would make is, that in this prophecy, as well as in many others, the future restoration of the Jews is spoken of, as well as their settlement at Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity. The return of the tribe of Judah from Babylon was an emblem and pledge of the return of all the tribes both of Israel and Judah from all countries whither they have been driven. This last and great event therefore is frequently shadowed out by the prophets under the former; and both are sometimes so blended together as to make it diffi-

(*a*) It may be proper to observe, that in v. 8 and 9, of this chapter of Zechariah, the full title of "the Lord of Hosts" is given to the Second Person as well as to the First.

(*b*) Amos, iv. 13. See also c. v. 8. and ix. 5, 6.

cult to ascertain which was the principal object in the mind of the writer. Perhaps the consideration of the magnitude and importance of the final restoration may have led the prophets, in almost every instance, to extend their views to that period; when their immediate object was to predict the partial re-establishment after the captivity of seventy years. Perhaps the animating prospect of the future prosperity of their nation under Messiah the King, may have so taken possession of their minds, that they dwelt with delight on that season of glory and happiness whenever they had occasion to console their countrymen with the promise of immediate deliverance from distress. Perhaps the images which the Spirit of God placed before their eyes were so imperfectly understood even by the prophets themselves, that they were led to speak of future events in a manner which to us may appear confused and indistinct; laying together the whole of God's dealings with his people; and exhibiting in one view the joyful return of Judah and restoration to the favour of God; the first advent of the Messiah; the blessings which the Jewish Church

would have enjoyed if they had acknowledged the Son of God, and which have been in some degree the portion of Christians; the second appearance of Christ; and the splendour and happiness of that period, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." Whatever may have been the occasion of it, there can be little doubt, that what has been said by one whose opinion is entitled to the most attentive consideration respecting the first and second advent of our Lord, may be applied to the two restorations of the people of God; namely, that "few of the prophecies comparatively relate to the first advent by itself, without reference to the second; and that of those that have been supposed to be accomplished in the first, many had in that only an inchoate accomplishment, and have yet to receive their full completion." (*a*)

But though the two events of which I am speaking are frequently united in the same prophecy, there are a few marks by which we may distinguish with certainty

(*a*) Bishop Horsley's Letter on Isa. xviii.

those parts which relate exclusively to the second restoration. The mention of the people of Israel ; — the calling of the nation out of those countries into which the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were never carried ; —the union of the Gentiles with the Jews in their privileges and in their worship ; — the mention of " the latter days," or of a period which is emphatically styled " that day," " the day of the Lord," a " great day ;" — the promise that Jehovah will in his own person dwell among his people and reign over them ; — these circumstances, together with a certain magnificence and sublimity, which the contemplation of the glories that will adorn their nation calls forth from the prophets, direct with considerable accuracy to the future return and conversion of the people of God. It is on this account that I venture to understand the words of the text as relating to the future restoration. The chapter from which they are taken forms a part of some prophecies delivered by Zechariah, the immediate object of which was to encourage his brethren, who were lately returned from Babylon, to proceed in rebuilding their city. In these, however,

are some circumstances mentioned, the accomplishment of which has not yet taken place. The people are called to "flee from the land of the North." The Almighty promises that "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a town without walls for the multitude of men and cattle:" that He "will be a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her:" that "the nations which spoiled" Judah "shall be a spoil to their servants:" that "many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be his people:" and that He "will come and dwell in the midst of the daughter of Zion." Some of these circumstances cannot be justly applied to the state of the Jews upon their return from Babylon; and the whole which is here foretold is too great and magnificent to have received at that time more than a partial accomplishment.

From what has been said, it appears that a period is yet to come, of glory to God, and of prosperity to the people of Israel and Judah; and that the Son of God, the Messiah, will dwell among them, acknow-

ledged and honoured as the Lord of Hosts. This high office must not be passed by in silence, when we are describing our blessed Lord in his various characters: I propose, therefore, to set him before you in this discourse as the Restorer of Israel and Judah: and for that purpose shall enumerate some of the circumstances which (as we learn from the inspired writers) will mark that season of the fulfilment of God's promises to his people.

It is proper to premise that this is not intended to be a critical inquiry into the meaning of the ancient prophecies: but a plain statement of a few acknowledged facts. Nor is it intended to indulge conjecture, or gratify curiosity. This is not the spirit, with which we should examine the word of God; not the spirit, which is likely to be rewarded by the discovery of the truth. The course of God's dealings is a subject of too high and holy a nature to be touched, except in devout awe and reverence. It should be approached with humble piety, a faithful trust in his promises, and submission to his will, and an ardent desire for the glory of our blessed

Redeemer, in whom all those promises are yea and amen.

1. The first circumstance deserving of notice is the conversion of the people of Israel and Judah. The Apostle St. Paul is a sufficient authority for our believing this. He tells us "that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved." (*a*) And he quotes some Scriptures in proof of his assertion. "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (*b*): for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (*c*) — Then shall the posterity of Judah "look upon him whom they have pierced (*d*):" Ephraim shall "bemoan himself, Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God (*e*):" and all the tribes shall unite in saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (*g*) It is difficult to select passages where so many offer themselves.

(*a*) Rom. xi. 25, 26.
(*b*) Is. lix. 20.
(*c*) Jer. xxxi. 31.
(*d*) Zech. xii. 10.
(*e*) Jer. xxxi. 18.
(*g*) Matt. xxiii. 39.

But I must remind you that the conversion of God's ancient people will consist partly in their turning from sin to righteousness; but more particularly in their acknowledgment of Jesus Christ. "The Children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." (*a*)

2. The next circumstance to be observed is the restoration of all the tribes to their own land. In the beautiful imagery of Isaiah, the Almighty, though the visible interpositions of his providence may cease, keeps his eye (*b*) fixed on his ancient habitation; and thither shall Israel and Judah return. "They shall go and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a

(*a*) Hos. iii. 5.
(*b*) Is. xviii. 4. See Bishop Horsley on this verse.

perpetual covenant." (*a*) When they shall have turned unto God, he will turn to them. "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, so he will seek out his sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." (*b*) Though they be like dried bones, and their hope be lost, yet will he open their graves, and put his Spirit in them that they may live, and place them in their own land. (*c*) He will gather them from all countries, whither they have been driven: he "will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." (*d*) The Almighty is represented as rejoicing over his people, like a father at the recovery of a beloved child, preparing a way for his chosen, and performing such wonders in their behalf, that the former things (*e*) shall be forgotten, and even the deliverance from Egypt, and the drying

(*a*) Jer. l. 4, 5. (*b*) Ezek. xxxiv. 12.
(*c*) Ezek. xxvii. 11, &c. (*d*) Is. xliii. 6.
(*e*) Is. xliii. 18. Jer. xvi. 14.

up of the Red Sea, shall be no more celebrated.

3. The third thing to be remarked is, that the people of God will be restored to their native land in the midst of wars and tumults. Perhaps it may be more correct to say that their return will be preceded by these violent convulsions, and by a season of distress and tribulation, such as the world has never yet witnessed. It is one of the established methods of God's providence to try his servants by severe judgments before he bestows upon them some signal instance of mercy. Perhaps in that awful period, to which I am directing your thoughts, when the dispensations of the Almighty will be rapidly drawing to a close, and mercies unknown before will be displayed, that season of rest and peace may be ushered in by a short but tumultuous day of distress and persecution, and extraordinary power be given to the enemies of God, previously to their total overthrow. This destruction will take place, as it is supposed, in the holy land. "Between the seas in the glorious holy mountain will the great enemy of the Most High plant the taber-

nacles of his palaces." (*a*) There he will come to his end; and there "will the hand of the Lord rest;" there "will the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things;" and there "he will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." (*b*) "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." (*c*)

The place of God's judgments is of less importance than the Person who executes them. And who is this but the Son of God? It is He who is described in the Apocalypse going forth to this battle, seated on a white horse, and a sharp sword going out of his mouth. (*d*) It is He who is represented by Isaiah returning from the conflict, glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatness of his strength, having trodden the people in

(*a*) Dan. xi. 45. (*b*) Isa. xxv. 6, 7. 10.
(*c*) Joel, iii. 16. (*d*) Rev. xix. 11. 15, &c.

his anger, and trampled them in his fury. (*a*) It is the opinion of many learned men that there will be a visible manifestation of the Son of God at Jerusalem to protect his faithful servants and confound his enemies; when he will descend in glory, attended by his saints, and encompassed by the bright cloud which of old marked the presence of Jehovah. Such an appearance will be well calculated to confound his enemies, to deliver his chosen, and to usher in the season of mercy, and of constant visible interpositions of Jehovah.

4. This leads to the next thing worthy of observation. The first and most remarkable circumstance in the condition of God's people after their settlement in their own land, is His immediate presence among them. "Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." (*b*) "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them and be their God." (*c*) — The

(*a*) Isa. lxiii. (*b*) Isa. xii. 6. (*c*) Rev. xxi. 3.

divine Person who will be more particularly present with his people is the Son of God. He who has from the beginning, either in humility or in glory, directed the concerns of the world, and especially of the Church; to whom was entrusted the great work of salvation, and to whom the Father hath committed all judgment; He will reign visibly among his people in the latter days. "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them." (*a*) This will be the accomplishment of the promise which was made with an oath to David, that his "throne should be established for ever." (*b*) This will be the fulfilment of all the prophecies respecting the glorious reign of Messiah, and the prosperous state of the Jewish Church, which were so fatally misunderstood by that deluded people. Then will Jerusalem be indeed "the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel;"

(*a*) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. (*b*) 2 Sam. vii. 16.

and He who was once "despised and rejected" of his people will be acknowledged as their "Saviour and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

5. The other circumstances, which are mentioned as characteristic of this new and blessed state, may, perhaps, be looked upon as the consequence of the immediate presence of God with his people. Thus we are told that God will make a new covenant with them. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord," by the mouth of Jeremiah; "that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah (*a*); and by the prophet Ezekiel, "I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." (*b*) This promise, as we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, has been already in part accomplished in the Christian Church; but its more full and glorious completion yet remains to be brought about in God's good time.

6. This new covenant is described by

(*a*) Jer. xxxi. 31. (*b*) Ezek. xvi. 60.

Jeremiah: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least to the greatest, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and will remember their sin no more." (*a*) From hence we may conclude that a much higher degree of knowledge, particularly of religious knowledge, will be one of the characters of that happy state of which we have been speaking. And thus we read, in the prophets, that as ignorance and blindness are inflicted upon the people as a punishment for their wickedness; and a famine, (as the prophet Amos expresses it,) "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord (*b*);" so "hereafter the veil of ignorance which is spread over all nations" shall be removed; "knowledge shall be increased;" yea, "the earth shall be

(*a*) Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. (*b*) Amos, viii. 11.

full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

7. The pardon of sin is mentioned by Jeremiah as one of the promises under the new covenant in the verses which have been just quoted. And in another passage of great beauty he records a promise of Jehovah to "the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel." "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth; and I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me: and it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it." (*a*) Such is the gracious pardon and abundant mercy which will then be extended to the returning tribes. — But, now,

(*a*) Jer. xxxiii. 6. 8, 9.

so heinous was the sin of Israel and Judah, — of Israel in continued idolatry, and of Judah in crucifying the Messiah, — that this pardon must be preceded by a signal repentance and contrition. This, therefore, our blessed Lord will produce in them. He will humble them with that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation." "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." (*a*) "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." (*b*)

8. The consequence of this deep humiliation, this abundant pardon and superior knowledge, is the greater practice of virtue. Thus we find Isaiah foretel, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." (*c*) "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the

(*a*) Zech. xii. 10. (*b*) Zech. xiii. 1. (*c*) Isa. lx. 21.

holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." (*a*) And St. John teaches "that there shall in no wise enter into the new Jerusalem any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." (*b*) The Israelitish Church, which had been rejected on account of her transgressions (*c*), shall, when she is received by her divine Consort, "be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; the fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints." What else is that "beauty" which "the King greatly desires (*d*)," but the beauty of holiness?—what, but the beauty of sanctity and virtue, greatly desired by Him who is himself "fairer than the children of men," who "loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness."

9. This superior degree of purity and holiness in the people of God is, it must be observed, the gift of God himself, the effect of that abundant effusion of the Spirit which will adorn the Church under his

(*a*) Isa. lii. 1. (*b*) Rev. xxi. 27. (*c*) Isa. l. 1.
(*d*) Ps. xlv. 10. See Bp. Horne on this Psalm, and Bp. Horsley's Sermons, vol. 1.

own immediate care. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." (*a*) A similar promise was made to the Israelites by Moses when shortly before his death he set before them the judgments and mercies which should be their portion in the latter days: "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." (*b*) The "pouring out of the Spirit," to use the expressive language of the prophet Joel, will probably form a remarkable character in the days of which we are speaking, both with regard to the extraordinary gifts which will be bestowed, and the spiritual graces which the faithful will enjoy. (*c*) It will be a great, and (if we may use the term) an appropriate ornament of Messiah's reign. As

(*a*) Ezek. xxxvi. 26. (*b*) Deut. xxx. 6.
(*c*) Is. xliv. 3; lix. 21.

when he ascended up on high he gave gifts unto men, so when he shall again appear among his people he will pour forth his holy Spirit so largely, 'that the day of Pentecost itself shall be only a type of this yet greater and more extensive effusion.' (*a*)

10. But the knowledge, the holiness, and the various blessings which adorn this happy period, are not confined to the people of Israel. "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day," saith the Prophet in the text. Moses, foreseeing it, calls on the Gentiles to "rejoice with his people."(*b*) And Isaiah foretels that "the forces of the Gentiles shall come" to Zion: that they "shall suck the breasts of her consolations, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (*c*) We learn from St. Paul, that the full conversion of the Jews will be the riches of the Gentiles, that their reconciliation will be, as it were, life to the rest of the world. (*d*) The event will be so wonderful, and attended with so many extraor-

(*a*) Faber on the Prophecies concerning the Restoration of Israel and Judah, v. 2. p. 197.

(*b*) Deut. xxxii. 43. (*c*) Isa. lx. 5, 16.

(*d*) Rom. xi. 12, 15.

dinary circumstances, with the display of supernatural power, the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, the signal manifestation of divine glory and greatness, mercy and truth, that the tidings of it will awaken a spirit of religion in a thousand lifeless hearts, and make an unbelieving world turn to behold their God. Thus the restoration and conversion of the Jews will be but the commencement of Christ's glorious reign. "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord." (*a*) "From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same his name shall be great among the Gentiles." (*b*)

11. The Jews and Gentiles being thus united in one body of faithful worshippers, a pure and holy service will be paid to God in Jerusalem. "Many people shall say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord," that is, to the Church of God, "and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (*c*) "Then," saith God, "will I turn unto the people a pure religious confession, that they may all call

(*a*) Ps. xxii. 27. (*b*) Mal. i. 11. (*d*) Isa. ii. 3.

upon the name of the Lord." (*a*) "It shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." (*b*)

12. When the people thus turn to God in prayer, and in a faithful obedience to his laws, they will enjoy the happy effects of their conversion in all worldly and spiritual blessedness. "The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever(*c*):" peace from enemies without, quietness and happiness among themselves. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more: but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid." (*d*) Almost all the prophets expatiate with delight on the happiness which will hereafter be enjoyed by the people of God in their own land. But Isaiah, the most sublime and beautiful of all, breaks

(*a*) Zeph. iii. 9.
(*b*) Isa. lxvi. 23.
(*c*) Isa. xxxii. 17.
(*d*) Micah, iv. 3, 4.

forth in the highest and most rapturous strains: sometimes describing it in the plainest, sometimes in figurative, language. "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders. (*a*) I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." (*b*) The state of internal peace and quiet is described, with great elegance, by the taming of the most ferocious animals. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." (*c*) The great happiness of the nation is foretold under the image of days of wonderful light and glory. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." (*d*)

(*a*) Isa. lx. 18. (*b*) Isa. lxv. 19.
(*c*) Isa. xi. 6. (*d*) Isa. xxx. 26.

You have now before you a short account of the leading events which will take place hereafter, when the great day shall arrive of judgment against the enemies of God, and of mercy to his chosen people; and a sketch of the happy state to be enjoyed by the Church during the glorious reign of Christ. You see how this divine Person is the great actor of all the wonders then to be performed; and Jerusalem the theatre where he will display his glories. He who was with the Israelites in the wilderness as the Angel of the Covenant, will again lead his people to the mountain of his holiness, not now faithless or rebellious, but rejoicing in his protection, while they mourn over those sins which have so long hidden from them the light of his countenance. How gloriously will the day-spring from on high then visit them! What a splendid light will burst upon their minds, when they shall come to a full understanding of the whole course of prophecy, and they shall see their Messiah no less illustrious in his sufferings than in his exaltation; equally to be acknowledged and adored as a Man of Sorrows and as the

Lord of Glory. Then will he indeed make good the precious promises made to their fathers: he will gratify all their desires; he will fulfil their longing expectation; he will more than accomplish all that they had looked for in the Son of David; since the highest earthly prosperity will be lost, like rivers in the ocean, in the abundance of spiritual blessings. Then too shall cease their envy towards other nations, and they shall rejoice to make the Gentiles, whom they formerly abhorred and despised, partakers of the bounty which themselves enjoy. Thus will the Son of God become the King of Jews and Gentiles, and all people will unite in blessing "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The promises of glory and prosperity which will then be fulfilled under the immediate reign of Christ, have been in part accomplished to the Christian Church in all ages. The Saviour has been always present with the faithful under this dispensation; the knowledge of God and of true religion has been encreased ten-fold, and more particularly the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ has been fully

revealed; the pardon of sin upon true repentance has been secured to his servants; the gifts of the Spirit have been poured forth abundantly; a purer worship has been established, and greater holiness inculcated; the Gentiles have been received among the people of God; and peace and good-will which were proclaimed at the birth of Jesus, have been the ornaments of his religion, and the effects of its establishment in the world. These blessings demand, on our part, the return of warm gratitude, and steady obedience, the practice of exalted piety, and the cherishing of those sentiments of love and peace which the Gospel inculcates. This will be the conduct hereafter of the peculiar people of God. We are now his people: We of this country are a highly favoured people. Oh! let us not be unmindful of the privileges and blessings which we enjoy. There is unhappily among us a spirit of pride, a spirit of division, a spirit of falsehood and impiety. We do not serve God in truth, nor with all our heart; but some serve him coldly, some in hypocrisy, some in error, and some (with sorrow we speak it) can

scarcely be said to serve him at all. Such will not be the service paid in the new Jerusalem. All hearts will then be enflamed with ardent love; all tongues will be in unison to praise the Saviour and Redeemer; all knees will bow down together before the Lord and his Christ. Let this ardour of devotion, this unity, this spirituality of religion, be in some measure practised by us in this imperfect state; that as we partake of the blessings promised to the saints hereafter, our service may bear some proportion to that which they will delight to pay.

You have heard in what terms the prophets describe the blessed state of peace which the people of God will enjoy hereafter; the fiercest animals are said to lay aside their savage disposition, and unite in bonds of amity with those which used to be their prey. Let us then learn to lay aside every thing in our hearts that is cruel or ungentle; and excite and encourage those sentiments of love and harmony, of forbearance and forgiveness, of Christian charity and benevolence; — those sentiments, and those affections, which may pro-

cure peace among ourselves, and make us worthy disciples of Him who is emphatically said to be Love itself.

If we thus turn to the Lord to serve him faithfully, we shall even now enjoy, in a great degree, the blessing promised in the text. He will come unto us, and dwell in the midst of us; we shall be his people; and this land will be his portion and his habitation. And surely sweet, though awful, is the thought of his presence! How should it calm our perturbed imaginations; check our aspiring thoughts; and wean us from any fond opinion of ourselves, or delight in worldly and sensual pleasures! How should it lift our hearts above the earth, and shed over them a steady serenity and holy joy! "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord!" Let every heart be filled with reverential awe, and "every mouth be stopped which would utter any thing against God." Let us live as if his eye were now upon us, as if he were himself walking with us, and his example ever in our sight.

Let me, in conclusion, address you, my Christian brethren, in the words with which Isaiah concludes a prophecy similar to that

contained in the text: "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Let us not walk in the darkness of ignorance, "groping like the blind," but let us acquire the light of useful, saving knowledge. Let us not bewilder ourselves in the mists and mazes of error; but let us suffer the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth. Let us not walk in the darkness of vice; but since light is come into the world, let us follow the light, and let our deeds be made manifest that they are wrought in God. Let us not follow our own will, nor our own ways, nor any false lights which we may meet with in the world, but let us follow the will of God, and walk in his light; that light which shone from heaven when his Son came into the world, "and in which is no darkness at all." "He," saith St. John, "is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He, saith the same Apostle, will be the light of the city of God, where his saints shall reign with him for ever and ever.

SERMON XVIII.

The Judge of Quick and Dead.

Rev. xxii. 12.

Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

If any thing were wanting to prove the truth of the Christian religion, and add weight to its importance, it might be supplied by the consideration of that exact recompence and retribution which we are taught to expect at the end of all things. Having shewn the origin of sin and wickedness, and the method which God hath been pleased to take for the salvation of his creatures, by sending his Son into the world; having revealed the laws by which he directs their conduct, and the grace by which

he assists their endeavours; — having, in short, given the only satisfactory account which was ever delivered or devised, of the cause of evil, and pointed out a sufficient remedy for it; the Gospel does not leave us in uncertainty respecting the future; on the contrary, it announces a conclusion worthy of God, and fit to excite the hopes and exalt the affections of man. If vice should at last be triumphant, or should even remain unpunished; and the labours of virtue, which are too often the object of ridicule, should in the end be unrewarded, what will become of the goodness and holiness of God, and of that power which we believe him to exercise in support of his holiness? What foundation is there for our faith and trust in him? What encouragement to persevere in well-doing? — The ignorance of heathens respecting the future state is one of those circumstances which they have most cause to deplore. Uninstructed in the truth, yet unable to bear the thought of perishing for ever, they form to themselves a future state, such as is best suited to their own conceptions of happiness. Thus, that prospect which should be

the noblest encouragement to virtue, is often calculated to excite the basest or most violent passions. The Mahometan paradise is a stimulus to lust and loose desire; and the heaven which is promised to the disciples of Odin, and the savages of North America, is an incentive to all that is wild and daring, even to cruelty and revenge. — The religion which cometh down from Jehovah is the only one which promises such an end of all sublunary things as is worthy of a great and holy God; and calculated for man — a frail, imperfect creature, strongly moved by hope and fear, capable of much good, yet too often the victim of low desires, and base or malignant passions.

That which the Gospel has revealed concerning the end of the world, and the future state, is this: That "God has appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained," even Jesus Christ: That in this day of trial, when every work, every idle word, and every secret thought, shall be brought into judgment, a separation shall be made between the good and the

bad, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, or as the corn is winnowed and separated from the chaff: That those who shall be then approved in the sight of God shall dwell for ever in his presence, where sin and sorrow can never enter; while the wicked shall go away "into everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels."

Here is a dispensation most awful, most alarming, yet most encouraging;—which will draw the veil from virtue and from vice, will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, will solve all difficulty, clear up all confusion, reform every thing that is false and erroneous, and regulate every thing that is disordered. The great day of retribution will bring due honour and glory to God: not so much by the splendour of his appearance, or by the power and vengeance which he will display against his enemies; as by the signal manifestation of his justice and truth, by the triumph of virtue, and by the praise and honour, the reverence and adoration, which shall then be paid by all created beings to his Son, the blessed Jesus. And as this day will bring

glory to God and Christ, so the thought of it, and of the eternity which shall follow, is well calculated to promote his kingdom among men. Liable, as we are, to be moved by hopes and fears, and attached as we are to the world and all that it presents to us, what can so effectually rouse us as the prospect of the greatest happiness, or of intolerable and endless torment? What can operate so powerfully to wean us from a world we love too well, as the assurance of higher joys at God's right hand? What will teach us to govern our thoughts, and to avoid all secret sin, so successfully as the consideration, that what is now concealed will hereafter be made known, and what is now hidden from the eyes of men will then be published to men and angels? The great excellence of the promise which is made to the faithful in the Gospel is, that it is not merely an exalted degree of happiness as a reward for well-doing; but that the reward consists in the perfect exercise of that virtue which is here made the condition of obtaining it. The graces of love, holiness, heavenly mindedness, whose ardour is chilled in this lower world, and their

purity sullied by human frailty and earthly defilement, shall expatiate with renewed vigour and spiritual strength, unrestrained and uncontaminated, in the courts above: faith shall be perfected in the beatific vision; and hope in heavenly enjoyment; and the desire of seeing and being like God shall receive an eternal accomplishment in his blessed and glorious presence. Thus the contemplation of the heavenly paradise not only animates our desires, but purifies our hearts. An earnest longing after the eternal inheritance has nothing in it servile or mercenary. It is a love of holiness, — aiming at perfection, — striving to be like God. Such a desire cannot really enter into an unsanctified heart, — nor can a true dread of the punishment of sin be found there. For that is not only a fear of punishment, but a fear and hatred of sin; an unwillingness to offend God; a fixt persuasion, that what he has forbidden must be fatal to man's happiness; and a holy abhorrence of every thing that opposeth his will. — So important is the revelation which has been made of the righteous judgment of God: so honourable to the Almighty will be the

day of final retribution: so useful it is to man to reflect on the judgment of that great day; and on the excellence of reward and severity of punishment which are to follow.

The remainder of this discourse shall be employed in setting these particulars more exactly before you, and directing your eyes to Christ, as the Judge of quick and dead. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Who is he that cometh? How will he come? And what will be the object of his coming?

I. He that is to come is Jesus Christ. The person who addressed the words of the text to St. John describes himself in the next verse, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." These magnificent titles can only belong to one of the three Persons of the Godhead. But they are appropriated to himself by Jesus Christ in the opening of the book of Revelation, where it is related that the apostle "heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha

and Omega, the first and the last; and turning to see the voice that spake with him, he saw one like unto the Son of Man." (*a*) The Scripture elsewhere informs us, that the future judgment is committed to Jesus Christ. He it is, by whom "God shall judge the world in righteousness (*b*)," who "is ready to judge the quick and the dead." (*c*) The whole of God's dispensations to men are carried on through his Son. Even the natural world is placed under his government: "all things were made by him (*d*):" and "he upholdeth them by the word of his power (*e*);" but the spiritual welfare of men, and their deliverance from sin and misery, are more particularly his care. He was with our first parents in Paradise, and with the patriarchs in their journeyings. He gave the law to the Israelites in the wilderness, and dwelt between the Cherubim. Having come upon earth, and laid down his life for our pardon, he is now head over all things to his Church, as that

(*a*) Rev. i. 11, 12. (*b*) Acts, xvii. 31.
(*c*) 1 Peter, iv. 5. (*d*) John, i. 3. (*e*) Heb. i. 3.

which he has purchased to himself; and he will reign visibly among his saints, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." Thus, having been, from the beginning, the mediator between God and man, he will bring the wonderful scheme to a conclusion at the last day: having made known the will, and brought down from heaven the mercies of the Father, he will be the instrument also to execute his judgment. He will descend from heaven, and send forth his angels to summon all his creatures. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth;" and "he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations," and he will pronounce his sentence, and send them away to "everlasting punishment," or receive them to "life eternal."

Here, then, my brethren, the blessed Jesus is presented to you in another character; as Judge of quick and dead. The great mystery of redemption shall be completed by the same hand by which it was begun and carried on. He who came from heaven for our salvation shall again come

to lead his faithful servants to glory, and to punish the wicked. Let us be thankful that we are to receive our sentence from him, who can " be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are." And while vice and infidelity have cause to tremble at the thought of seeing Him as their Judge whom they have refused to receive as their Saviour and Lawgiver, let humble Faith lift up her head with joy, in expectation of that day when her patience and obedience, her labours of love, and meek submission to the will of God, shall be acknowledged and rewarded by Him whose works are great and marvellous, whose ways are just and true. " Alleluia: Salvation and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments." (*a*)

The reason for which the Father " has committed all judgment to the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgment," is, " because He is the Son of Man (*b*)," and " that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the

(*a*) Rev. xix. 1, 2. (*b*) John. v. 27.

Father." (*a*) The humiliation and sufferings of our blessed Lord are represented as having led the way to his glory. "Because he humbled himself God hath highly exalted him." And what exaltation can be greater, or how can more honour be bestowed upon him, than by placing him on the throne of judgment? He who was "despised and rejected of men," and is now, by some who call themselves by his name, vilified and degraded from his true glory, — that glory which he had with the Father before the world was, — He who is thus despised and degraded, because he has appeared as a mere man, is for that very reason raised on high, and appointed to be Judge of quick and dead; that those who once looked on him in malice to pierce him may look on him in the last day in shame and confusion, trembling before him; and they who once bowed the knee in scorn, or who now refuse to worship him, may learn to "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

II. You have seen who it is, who in the text declares that he is coming to judg-

(*a*) John, v. 23.

ment: the next question is, In what manner will he come? We reply, He who once came in humility to save, will come in glory to judgment. — But let the question be answered in the precise words of Scripture, than which nothing can be imagined more sublime and awful. "Behold, he cometh in clouds (*a*)! in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory! (*b*) Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all. (*c*) The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire. (*d*) He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. (*e*) He shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations (*g*); the sea shall give up the dead which are in it (*h*), and they that are alive shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." (*i*) "I saw a great white throne," saith St. John, "and him that sat on it, from

(*a*) Rev. i. 7. (*b*) Matt. xxiv. 30. (*c*) Jude, 14. 15.
(*d*) 2 Thess. i. 7. (*e*) 1 Thess. iv. 16.
(*g*) Matt. xxv. 31, 32. (*h*) Rev. xx. 13.
(*i*) 1 Thess. iv. 17.

whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them." (*a*)

And is this then the meek and lowly Jesus? Is this he who was despised and rejected of men? Is this great king of heaven sitting upon his judgment-seat, surrounded by a blaze of glory, and accompanied by an innumerable host of angels and glorified spirits, "thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him (*b*)," "the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat (*c*)," while all generations of men tremble before his throne, — is this he who once stood before an earthly tribunal, who was buffeted and scourged and spit upon, who was dragged to death, and lifted up on a cross, a spectacle of pity and derision? — Oh, my soul, turn and meditate on these things! Of what value is human greatness? What terrors has worldly rebuke, or worldly sorrow, to him who is beloved of God? When this world shall have

(*a*) Rev. xx. 11. (*b*) Dan. vii. 10. (*c*) 2 Pet. iii. 12

passed away, and every thing in it shall have perished for ever, will not the favour of Jesus Christ be worth more than the applause of thousands of our fellow-creatures? Will not "one virtuous deed, to all the world unknown," outweigh all the triumphs of wit or of arms? Will not the recollection of one act of piety or charity, recorded in the book of life, be more cheering to the soul, than all that lives in the praise of men? Is it not, even now, more truly honourable and commendable, to love and obey and copy him who is to be the Judge of all the earth, than to follow a multitude of creatures weak and sinful as ourselves? Is it not our wisdom to secure His favour, in whose hands are everlasting life and death? to obey His law, from whose mouth we are to receive our final doom? — Let it then be our most earnest endeavour, our highest ambition, to find favour in his sight. Let us pay him here that honour, which will be extorted from us hereafter. And let us bring him continually to our minds and to our hearts; and by prayer and meditation, by diligent study of his character and discourses, and frequent receiving of the holy

communion, meet him, as it were, in our closets, in his house, and at his table, that we may be prepared at the last great day to meet our Lord in the air.

III. The third question arising from the text is, What will be the object of Christ's coming? "My reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." My reward — my recompence: not merely a reward for the good; but a recompence also or requital for the wicked.

This expression suggests three things:

1st. That the distribution of rewards and punishments at the day of judgment will be according to the strictest justice. Perhaps it may be said, How can it be otherwise? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" It cannot indeed be otherwise: "Righteousness and equity are the habitation of his seat." Yet is it not a fearful thought, my brethren, that the day of grace will then be past? that there will be no longer room for repentance? that that day will be, strictly speaking, a day of justice, not of mercy? Let us lay hold of pardon and grace while it is an ac-

cepted time, while it is a day of salvation. And let us humbly hope and devoutly pray, that in Him whose ways are not as our ways, and whose attributes are not to be scanned or measured by us, mercy and truth may even then meet together, and "glory to God" concur with "good-will to man," at the second coming of our Lord, as their union was proclaimed by angels at his birth.

2. The second remark suggested by the text is, that the happiness and misery which will follow the judgment is of the nature of *a reward or recompence* for good or evil done. The foreknowledge of God and the free-will of his creatures every where meet in perfect harmony. His unspeakable goodness proposes a reward of which man is wholly unworthy: yet this reward is made to depend upon the labours of man, and proportioned to them. (*a*) This is to be learned and inferred from almost every part of Scripture, and more particularly from the language of our blessed Lord. In the parable of the talents the master is

(*a*) See note at the end of this Sermon.

represented as rewarding those servants who had increased the talents given to them. Why does he reward them? Not merely out of his free kindness, but "because they had been faithful." He punishes the man that hid his talent in the earth: Why? Not from his own power to punish, but because the servant was "wicked, slothful, and unprofitable." — When he shall sit on the throne of his glory he will call to those on his right hand to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. Why? Have they done any thing to qualify themselves for so high an honour? Yes — He was an hungered, and they gave him meat; — he was thirsty, and they gave him drink; or if not to him, to one of his brethren. Then too he will command those on his left hand to depart into everlasting fire. Have they done any thing, or omitted any thing, so as to render themselves deserving of punishment? Yes: they have been uncharitable to their brethren, and therefore to Him. — So that you see the joys which are in store for the righteous, and the punishment prepared for the wicked, are bestowed in the way of re-

compence and retribution: the one, the reward of "them that diligently seek God;" the other, "the wages of sin."

3. Thus I am anticipating the third remark which is suggested, or rather is distinctly expressed in the words of the text, namely, that this reward is to be bestowed upon every one *according to his works.* "Not every one that saith unto Christ, Lord, Lord"—not every one that professeth himself the servant of God or of Christ, "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of our Father which is in heaven." In that day of the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God he will render to every man according to his deeds: indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; and glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good." (*a*) This is the uniform language of Scripture. You have already heard it from the mouth of Jesus in the Gospel: hear it again from him in the book of Revelation, in the words which almost immediately follow the text:

(*a*) Rom. ii. 6, &c.

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (*a*)

Receive it then, my dear brethren, as the clear and decided doctrine of God's word, that every man's future state depends upon his conduct here. Let it not be said that our works are of no consequence: — it is according to them that we shall receive our reward of good or evil at the day of retribution. Let it not be said that because "eternal life is the gift of God," nothing is required on our part: — a gift may be accepted, or it may be refused; pardon may be freely granted, and honour freely conferred; yet both be made liable to conditions imposed by the giver. "There is a worthiness required in those who would be partakers of future glory, — a due disposition to receive it, wrought in us by the grace, and accepted through the

(*a*) Rev. xxii. 14, 15.

mercy of the Gospel covenant." (*a*) And this worthiness consists in a deep sense of our sinfulness and sad unprofitableness, a firm faith in our Lord Jesus, an ardent desire of the heavenly happiness, and a mighty zeal and diligence in our endeavours to obtain it. — Do not then rest satisfied with contemplating the mercy of God and the merits of Jesus Christ; do not think to magnify the greatness or goodness of your Creator and Redeemer by trusting to them for your reward, while you do nothing for yourselves; but let the consideration that that reward is to be given *according to your works* make you diligent to work out your salvation: let it quicken your faith, that it may be fruitful in good works; and animate your prayers for that grace which alone can enable you to perform them. Let the greatness of the promised reward, and the terrible nature of the punishment which is threatened, remind you of the height of virtue to which you should attain, and of the evil

(*a*) See Bishop Bull's excellent Discourse on the Worthiness of the Partakers of Future Glory, vol. 1.

nature of sin which must be for ever banished from the presence of a most holy God. And let a deep reflection on your own weakness and unworthiness stimulate your endeavours; since so much evil is to be overcome, so much slothfulness to be roused, so much holiness and heavenly-mindedness to be acquired, before you can be fit to appear before God. "The great, the mighty, the Lord of hosts is his name; great in counsel, and mighty in work: for his eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (*a*)

I have now answered the most important questions which arise out of the text. A question yet remains; but it is one of curiosity rather than of edification: — When will our Lord come? "Behold," saith he, "I come *quickly*." How, it may be asked, can this be true, when so many centuries have passed away, and his coming is yet delayed? — My brethren, let us not be

(*a*) Jer. xxxii. 18, 19.

anxious to enquire, where enquiry will argue more of a disposition to pry into the hidden things of God, than of Christian faith and humility. Especially let us carefully avoid the fault of those who are rebuked by St. Peter for asking, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (*a*) Remember the solemn answer given by the Apostle to such questioners: "Beloved, be not ignorant of this thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (*b*);" and the gentle rebuke which a similar question drew from our Lord, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." (*c*) Let us be content to believe that the "Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." (*d*) That which he hath spoken he will surely make good. If his coming be delayed, it is that he "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should

(*a*) 2 Pet. iii. 4. (*b*) Ver. 8.
(*c*) Acts, i. 7. (*d*) 2 Pet. iii. 9.

perish, but that all should come to repentance." (*a*) The bridegroom will come in his own good time: blessed are they that wait for his coming. The Master will return to settle with his servants; and happy they who shall have improved the talents entrusted to their care.

But whatever may be intended by the expression in the text with regard to the time of Christ's appearing, one thing may surely be collected from it, and from various other texts of Scriptures — that his coming will be sudden and unexpected. Unexpected, I mean, by ungodly men. As the deluge came upon the old world, and fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and the Roman armies upon Jerusalem, and swept away the enemies of God while they were careless and unprepared; so shall the last "day of the Lord come as a thief in the night; and when men shall say, Peace, and all things are safe, then shall sudden destruction come upon them, as upon a woman travailing with child, and they shall not escape. (*b*)" — Let not the warnings of

(*a*) 2 Pet. iii. 9. (*b*) Commination Service.

the Lord be given to us in vain. The awful nature of the events which are passing over us, the fulfilment of many prophecies, the diligent enquiries and calculations of learned men, the general diffusion of the Gospel, and the expectation which seems to prevail, — all concur in announcing that the great day is not far distant, when our Lord shall come, not perhaps to judge the world, but to gather together the scattered tribes of his people, and plant them again in their own land; — a day of glory and happiness, when the visible reign of Christ upon earth will commence. Some of those who are now born, some of those who are now amongst us, may perhaps live to see this day. And at the thought of it whose heart does not beat? Who does not ardently desire the promised time? Methinks we could stand, like the Apostles, gazing up to heaven, till we see our Lord come in like manner as he went into heaven. Come, thou Father of the future age, our Lord and our God! Thou that art the Redeemer of Jacob, and the hope of all the ends of the earth! Come, to vindicate thine honour, to restore the dispersed of Israel, to gather

thine elect from one end of heaven to the other. The eyes of all wait upon thee, O Lord! Thy faithful servants anxiously expect that period when thine own voice shall, as of old, cast out the evil one, and say to a troubled world, "Peace, be still;" when the eyes of the blind shall be opened to acknowledge thee, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing thy praise. Hasten, good Lord, this thy kingdom; the season of glory to God, and of peace to thy Church. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come! and him that is athirst, Come. Amen. Even so. Come, Lord Jesus!"

NOTE TO SERMON XVIII.

As it is very desirable to ascertain as far as possible the precise ideas intended to be conveyed by the inspired writers, the author subjoins a short enquiry into the meaning of the words μισθος and αξιος.

The original meaning of μισθος is "wages, hire, — merces, stipendium, præmium laboris:" which implies work done, or service performed, for which the labourer is paid. Hence it is used to express either "reward" or "punishment:" the former is called μισθος, though it be freely bestowed. A question then arises, Do we here lose the idea of *work* or *service performed*, which is the *measure*, though not the *occasion* of the recompence? The word is employed in an ambiguous sense, Rev. xxii. 12. where the reward or punishment is to be given to every one ως το εργον αυτου εσται, "according as his work shall be." It is used in the sense of punishment, 2 Pet. ii. 13, μισθον αδικιας, "the wages of iniquity;" so Rom. vi. 23, τα οψωνια της αμαρτιας, "the wages of sin." Here we have distinctly the idea of work, for which a man is to suffer; and in this case we are not afraid to say that he *deserves* the reward of his deeds. But since both senses are put together, as in Rev. xxii. 12. the *natural* conclusion will be that, if the wicked man will deserve *his* recompence, the righteous will also deserve *his*. One thing however is clear and very important; namely, that the term before us does not express or imply a *free gift*, but *a reward*. Eternal life is undoubtedly "the gift of God:" but here it is necessary

to make an accurate distinction: Salvation is the free gift of God; the original appointment of eternal life is a free gift: but when man is admitted into covenant with his Maker, and become heir of the exceeding great and precious promises made to the faithful, then eternal life becomes μισθος, a reward for faithful service; as banishment from the presence of God is the punishment threatened to neglect and disobedience. It would be unnecessary to remark, if it were not at all times important to correct the aspiring pride and conceit of man, that the service performed by the righteous is *not such as of itself can merit eternal life:* it is that which their heavenly Master will be pleased to accept. Still, though the servant be unprofitable, and the labour bear a very small proportion to the promised wages, we should lose sight of the true meaning of the terms employed by the sacred writers, and of the doctrine inculcated by them, if we did not teach that the heavenly happiness is *a reward* for "patient continuance in well-doing."

It would occupy too much space if every passage were to be set down, in which the word μισθος occurs; one very remarkable text deserves to be noticed. It is John, iv. 36. Here the word is used according to its original meaning, to signify wages for work done in the spiritual harvest. It is not expressly stated that the wages are life eternal; yet see the words immediately following, and compare Gal. vi. 8, 9.

Μισθαποδοσια is the reward of virtue, or the punishment of sin. Μισθαποδοτης is the rewarder of those who diligently seek God; in other words, of those who labour diligently in his service.

It may not be amiss to notice another term used in the New Testament — Βραβειον. This expresses the prize

to be given to those who shall be victors in the heavenly race. It is therefore a *reward*, to be obtained by hard labour and steady perseverance. It is the gift of Him who appointed the race; but it will not be bestowed upon the slothful or undeserving.

The meaning of the Greek αξιος seems to run nearly parallel with that of the English "worthy." Each is originally intended to express something *valuable* and *estimable*: αξιος being derived from the verb αγω, and signifying that which being placed in the scale inclines the beam: (see Constantine's Lexicon, and Duport in Theophrast. quoted by Parkhurst.) "Worthy," from possessing some worth or excellence. So also "dignus" from δικη, jus, "ut dignus sit cui jure aliquid tribuitur. Voss." Hence they signify "deserving," scil. either of reward or punishment; and are generally used in a good sense. But perhaps the true meaning of αξιος, which runs through the various applications of the word, retaining the original idea of the primitive, is "*comparable, corresponding, equivalent.*" The LXX. use αξιον αργυριον for כסף מלא full money, "as much money as it is worth." The money given is equal to the value of the thing purchased. — In Luke, xxiii. 15, 41, we have crime worthy of punishment, and punishment worthy of crime. They correspond to each other. — Matt. iii. 8, "fruits meet for repentance," answerable to repentance, or change of heart. — Rom. viii. 18, "worthy to be compared," or comparable to "the glory which shall be revealed." See Parkhurst's Lexicon. — Rev. vi. 6, "they are worthy," they deserve it; the punishment exactly corresponded to the offence, — blood for blood. When a person then is said to be αξιος, worthy, we are to understand that he possesses qualities, or

has performed actions, which in some degree correspond with the reward to be bestowed upon him, and render him a fit object of that reward. Two or three texts may be quoted by way of illustration. Matt. x. 10. et al. "The workman is worthy of his hire." A proverbial expression. The labour employed is worth the wages given for it. — Matt. x. 37, 38, "worthy of me," worthy of being Christ's disciple: qualified for his service. That service is an honour, of which the worldly, carnally minded man is unworthy. — Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." The purity of their garments qualifies them for this honour.

The use of the adverb ἀξίως confirms this interpretation of the adjective. It signifies "suitably;" the object of comparison being something dignified or excellent: "as becometh saints," Rom. xvi. 2; "worthy of the vocation," &c. Eph. iv. 1, *i. e.* agreeably to your Christian calling. Hence we may perhaps discover the true meaning of the Apostle's phrase respecting the Lord's supper, "eating and drinking unworthily;" that is, *unsuitably, in an unfit or unbecoming manner;* with inadequate conceptions of that high and holy mystery, or without that preparation of heart which becomes the honoured guests at the table of the Lord.

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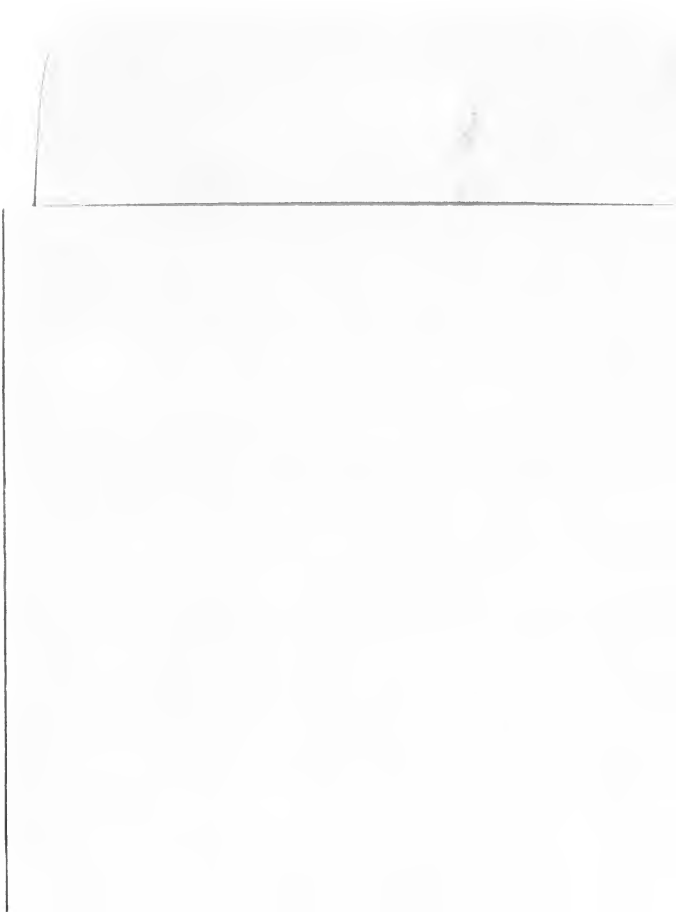
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